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CAPTAIN O'SULLIVAN;

OR,

ADVENTURES,

CIVIL, MILITARY, AND MATRIMONIAL,

OF A

GENTLEMAN ON HALF PAY.

BY

W. H. MAXWELL, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "STORIES OF WATERLOO," ETC.

And, oh! I feel there is but *one*—
One Mary in the world for me!
MOORE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.



1846.

1186.

**FREDERICK SHOBERL, JUNIOR,
PRINTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT,
51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET, LONDON.**

CAPTAIN O'SULLIVAN.

CHAPTER I.

I AM DETACHED TO BALLYSALLAGH—LOCAL SKETCHES—
INTRODUCTION TO MR. RYAN, THE SUB-SHERIFF—LAW
OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR IN CONNAUGHT.

What money have you got about you, Master Mathew?
SHAKSPEARE.

It was a mild, dark, windy day, in the first week of April, when, after a morning muster of my "charge of foot," I set out for Lough-nacurragh, to kill a kreel of trouts, could I but persuade them to shake off their general torpidity, and rise at sundry seductive-looking flies, which I had recently imported from the metropolis. The "lonely tarn" to which I

directed my steps was a huge pond of leaden-coloured water, situated in the centre of a barren moor; and from a rocky knoll, half-a-mile distant, a few runlets trickled down the hill, and, creeping through the morass, united with the dark waters of the Lough; while, on the other side, a drowsy dyke went twisting through the bog, and carried off the surplus supplies which occasionally came down in torrents from the neighbouring high grounds.

It was a place and water, however, to which neither the angler nor the artist would resort, as it afforded little on which to exercise painting or piscatorial skill. The scenery was wild and sterile, but without any traits of savage grandeur to redeem it; while the Lough was fringed with reeds—and, to be enabled to cast a fly beyond them, it was necessary to wade knee-deep through mud, having the tenacity of bird-lime. No caution could save the fisherman from loss; and on my last visit, I had left a casting-line behind

me to festoon the reeds, and a shoe as a votive offering to the Kelpie.

Everybody knows that a trout is capricious as a woman, and to woo is not to win, unless both be taken "in the humour." You may induce a sprightly, golden-tinted denizen of a sparkling stream, to shorten his siesta beside stone or alder-root, and spring like a voltigeur at the tinselled fly ; but, unless half-famished, the lazy, leaden-coloured bog-trout remains immoveable and impassive to temptation, and rejects the charmer's art, charm he never so wisely. On this occasion I found it so ; and after paddling through sedge and mud two mortal hours, I quitted this worthless pool for ever, leaving, in exchange for a brace of sooty-backed, ill-shapen fishes, a new shoe, a score of flies, and "the curse of Cromwell," superadded as a parting compliment.

After I had cleared the moor, and performed ablution in the first clear rivulet I met with, purified from half a stone of mud, I marched lightly towards my quarters. It

was still early in the day, and I took a circuitous route home by the low road, anxious to abridge the long dull evening which was to be passed in a congregation of mud cabins called a town, beautified by a broken-windowed edifice named a chapel, and a rickety, ruinous, three-storied house, roofed with gray flags, and for miles around forcing its tall, thin, shapeless chimneys on the eye. In this deserted-looking mansion, nevertheless, the gentle reader is respectfully informed, that a drummer and fifer, two sergeants, thirty-six rank and file, a consumptive subaltern, and his very humble servant were domiciled, to uphold the crown and dignity, and annihilate illicit whisky and the fabricators of the same.

At a half mile distance from Ballysallagh¹ —as this agreeable retirement was truthfully denominated — two private dwelling-places might be seen. The thatched building was the priest's, the slated one the tithe-proctor's.

¹ In Irish, *Balla* means "a town," and *sallagh*, "dirty."

Three guagers had located themselves in a public-house not a stone's cast from our sentry-box—their business, to suppress distillation—ours, to answer their “ writ of assistance,” and protect them in the execution of a most unpopular duty.

The excisemen were very civil; and excepting that their requisitions were generally made at night, and the worse the weather, the more favourable for the surprise of malefactors, we got on agreeably enough. Of course, the only liquor we indulged in was the *veritable* mountain dew; and a marvellous keg presented to us on our arrival at Ballysallagh actually turned out a widow's cruise. Whenever a hollow sound from the vessel announced a consumption in its contents, by some undiscoverable accident, the sentry, while walking “ his lonely round,” would stumble over a full cask; but who the devil left it there, could never be detected. Generally, on these mysterious occasions, a guager would be seen by some straggling soldier,

flitting round a corner of the building; but as it would have been useless to attempt to solve what seemed an impenetrable mystery, the midnight deodand, on the following morning, was deposited in the widow's cruise.

The occupant of the slated house was the proctor—one of those abominated nuisances, who, like “middlemen,” were at once the curse and detestation of the peasantry. The fellow was a heartless scoundrel, and the favourite *employé* of a wholesale farmer of tithes—for his master, a vulgar, illiterate, overgrown, and deformed brute, leased parishes by the dozen, and ground thousands annually from the wretched serfs. The countenance and character of the functionary of this tithe leviathan were in keeping, and both of the worst description. The people abhorred and feared him. No wonder, then, that he had been fired at returning from a fair, and his peat-stack been burned on the bog. Consequently, he preferred a slated house to a thatched one; never ventured

after sunset out of doors; and if you met him in noontide on the high-road, the brass knobs of a pair of holster pistols might be seen peeping from the pockets of *cota more*,¹ indicating that the honest tithe-proctor was not exactly on a bed of roses.

The most exalted personage of this pleasant community remains to be described — to wit, Father Theodore Dempsey; and of Father Thady — as the peasantry designated their spiritual director — I must give a personal sketch.

The priest was a stout, middle-sized, mild-tempered, old man, with silver hair, and an inclination to obesity; but he was vigorous beyond his years, which were said to border upon fourscore. His dress was such as the Irish priesthood wore formerly, before they became Catholic rectors, and returned members to Parliament by the dozen. The lower extremities of Father Thady were encased in Connemara hose, and his “continuations” were

¹ *Cota more*, anglice, a great coat.

corduroy ; a dusky black coat, broad-brimmed hat, and a wig—whether hair, tow, or wool, it would have been difficult to determine—completed the costume of this antiquated churchman.

In those happy days, a poor priest would have been considered a curiosity. His wants were few, and the liberality of the flock was untaxed and voluntary. The thousand and one little presents offered throughout the year were more than sufficient to supply the commissariat of his reverence ; and hence, the fees received were unrequired, laid aside, hoarded during life, and partitioned after death among his relatives. But Father Thady was poor. His parish was mountainous and unproductive—he had brought up two orphan nieces, and both married badly—and he had sent one nephew to Maynooth, who eloped and enlisted in the 5th royal Irish dragoons. He had set up another in a country shop, but he ran off within the year, leaving the village baker without a wife, and his uncle

security for a hundred pounds. All these calamities had almost broken the priest's heart. As to property, that was gone — christening and marriage money, offerings and oblations, had disappeared—and of all the probationers in purgatory, whose sufferings Father Thady had abridged, not one solitary token of these sinners' gratitude could have been discovered in the old man's treasury. On that blessed morning when my detachment marched into barracks in Ballysallagh, if public report might be trusted, Father Thady was not worth a *scultogue*.¹

But why this rigmarole about an old priest, and his nieces and nephews? Patience, gentle reader. “Every man,” Jack Falstaff says, “knows best how to buckle his own belt;” and if you are to be delectated by my reminiscences, you must let me tell my story my own way.

I said that I took the lower road, and, had I known localities better, I would have stuck

¹ A Connaught coin—value undetermined.

to the higher one. The low road was three miles about, and as the measurement was Irish, the English reader may safely set it down at five. Shortly after I had entered on my new route, I was overtaken and passed by a stout-looking gentleman, seated "alone in his glory" in an ill-appointed gig. As he came up, above the rattle of axles innocent of grease, I overheard him lilting snatches of an old ballad; and as he trotted past, he threw a furtive but searching glance behind, and I caught the burden of his ditty.

Arrah! Thady, ye gander,
Ye'er like a highlander,
For want of your breeches—
Ah! ye divil go list,
Take a gun in your fist,
And don't be mending old ditches
Without any breeches.

Well, there was nothing offensive in this. My corduroys were unexceptionable, and "my withers were unwrung." On went the gig-driver—but an accident occurred that introduced me to his acquaintance.

He was mounting a small single arch which spanned a streamlet, not deep enough at present to bathe a lapdog in, but in winter, at times, rolling a volume of black and angry water which came tumbling from the adjacent hills. In topping this sudden ascent, a trace gave way; the driver pulled up, consigned the designer of the bridge and the harness-maker to perdition, grunted out, in Irish and English, divers imprecations against both, and leisurely essayed to attempt a descent from his vehicle, in order to refit the damage. He was both short-winded and corpulent—and before he could commence operations, I had replaced the trace, and put him once more in marching order.

“Particularly obliged to you, sir,” said the stranger, with a bow: “not aware of to whom I am under obligations—face quite unknown—although with those of the ——— gentry I am tolerably well acquainted. May I inquire to whom I am indebted for this civility?”

I told him briefly.

“ Ah ! then you are quartered there,”—and he pointed to the staring chimneys of the barrack—“ and if Connaught were riddled, you could find nothing that would match Ballysallagh.”

“ You seem acquainted,” I replied, “ with the pleasant spot in which I am located at present.”

“ Indeed I am,” returned the gig-driver ; “ and I may add that there are few places within the Bailywick with which I am not tolerably familiar. But will you step up, take a seat beside me, and I'll set you down at your barrack as we pass.”

“ Willingly,” I replied ; and hopping into the vehicle, I deposited my person beside that of the obliging proprietor.

I looked at him attentively. He was a stout, clumsy, short-necked personage, with a mischievous gray eye and rubicund complexion. His teeth were good, his countenance far from disagreeable, while the expres-

sion of the face was comic, and the manner original and amusing.

"Captain," he said, "you are a bold man. You have just now done what half the fire-eaters in the country would have been mortally afraid to do."

"I am really not aware of the act of heroism I have performed," I replied; "have the kindness to explain it."

"You have seated yourself at the side of the representative of royalty—put yourself within short reach of the arm of the law—and. . . ."

"You are not the hangman, I hope."

"No, faith," returned the red-nosed stranger, "but we operate occasionally together—for I am the *sub-sheriff*."

"The sub-sheriff?"

"Don't be uneasy, I have nothing against you at present."

"Against me?"

"Oh! your name's not in the office at all. May-be a good time's coming, and we shall be better acquainted. Every gentleman is

liable to a pull-up. One has his name across a strap or two—another has taught his tailor book-keeping”

“Taught his tailor book-keeping!” I ejaculated.

“Don’t enter on the subject, if it’s disagreeable. I don’t want an introduction, as I suppose you are quite able to break him yourself. But, talking of cloth, I have a great regard for yours, for once I wore that honourable livery myself.”

“Indeed ! And may I inquire what calamity robbed our gracious lord the king of so gallant a defender ?”

“Well, then,” returned the sub-sheriff, “as doctors say of diseases, the causes were complicated. I entered the militia on account of a woman, and retired from the service on account of a horse.”

“Singular causes indeed.”

“Plain enough when understood,” observed the stranger.

“Possibly I can guess the first. You were

‘crossed in love,’ as chambermaids call it, and in despair took to soldiering.”

“Not exactly,” returned the deputy representative of majesty, “but it was too great sensibility on my part that caused the misfortune, after all. We have three miles to drive, and if you please I will tell you the particulars.”

I bowed, and the stout gentleman proceeded.

“My aunt Dogherty was a pattern for women, and a better Catholic never kept Lent. She never missed mass if she could help it, and she was a Carmelite into the bargain. Well, she died one summer evening, and the next night I went over to the wake. As I came in, Father Peter Hopkins was just taking a pinch off the plate.¹ ‘Mary Dogherty,’ says he, looking her full in the face, ‘if iver woman went to heaven from the parish

¹ At an Irish wake a plate is placed upon the breast of the deceased, and the snuff or salt which it contains bespeak the wealth or poverty of the departed.

of Islandeady direct, it is yerself is she; and now, and at this blessed hour ye'r puttin the evenin in, snug and warm with St. Peter.' Well, the wake was very crowded, and the evening very close, and Nancy Braddigan, my cousin, terribly overcome with heat and sorrow—so we agreed to go out to the garden, and cry comfortably in the summer-house with nothing to disturb us.

“Well, the ould Carmelite was buried, and went to glory without delay. Time passed over, and I was slowly recovering from my affliction. One fine morning, six months afterwards, my father gave me a wink to follow him. He headed to the barn, and I was with him in a jiffy.

“‘Jack, ye villain of the world,’ says he, pleasantly commencing the conversation, ‘what’s this I hear about your cousin?’

“‘What cousin?’ says I, innocently.

“‘Arrah! how ignorant ye are? Who else but Nancy Braddigan.’

“I stared at him in surprise.

“‘Oh, ye thief,’ says he, ‘do ye mind the night your aunt was waked?’

“‘Divil a one me,’ says I, ‘can remember anything about it, for grief was fairly murdering me.’

“‘*Mona sin dioual!*’ replied my father, ‘if ye don’t spoil a market, why, we’ll put a nick in the post.’

“‘Arrah! The Lord forbid I should be hanged, if it was only on account of the family!’

“‘Well,’ says he, somewhat softened, ‘we must plaster the misfortune over as well as we can. You must cut your stick, and let your mother take Biddy to saa, and swear there’s nothing the matter with her but a dropsy. I hear the sheriff did not lave a clout behind him at Mount Browne last Monday. Take half a score of weathers (wedders) with ye, try your luck, and maybe the colonel would give you a commission in the militia.’

“Away I went, and, faith, I hit the time

to fortune. The colonel's have-a-care¹ was coming back with an empty cart, without being able to obtain credit for a kidney, and in two days afterwards the house was to be full of company, and nothing in the larder. A bargain was soon concluded. Peter Corcoran had just died of a whisky-fever, greatly regretted by the regiment. I got his ensigncy, and the colonel kept the sheep."

"An excellent arrangement on both sides," I observed. "But did you not find it difficult 'to make tongue and buckle meet;' or, in plain English, to live upon your pay?"

"Not the least," responded the sub-sheriff; "and yet I hunted twice a week, sate late at mess, did everything as well as every body else, and spent three hundred a-year."

"The old fellow came down handsomely," I remarked.

"Oh, to the old fellow, as ye call him, I was never indebted for a *carlycew* beyond the fare of the mail coach that brought me to the regiment—I dealt in horseflesh."

¹ *Anglice*—a steward.

"Oh, bought and sold."

"Not exactly."

"What then?"

The sub-sheriff lowered his voice, and looked at me for a moment.

"I may as well tell you at once as kill you with curiosity, I suppose. Dealing was not the order of the day—*we stole . . .*"

"Stole!"

The red-nosed stranger gave an assenting nod.

"Bah!" I said, "you are laughing at me."

"I wish you had a tithe of the stolen horses that passed through my hands in the stable of Ballysallagh. But horse-stealing and a commission now-a-days would be objected to. In ninety-eight, it did well enough."

"I cannot comprehend the association—you must enlighten me."

"I'll easily do that," returned the sub-sheriff. "You must remember that at that blessed period which I allude to, the world was a happy one. All helter-skelter, all hurry-

skurry—this day, a man was worth a thousand pounds, to-morrow, he could not muster turnpike money for a walking-stick. One brother was a colonel of rebels, another, captain of yeomanry, —and all then was managed like a fox-hunt—short, sharp, and decisive. The devils caught on both sides were not kept long in suspense—the rebels piked theirs upon the hill—and we hanged ours in the market-place—but they had no sense of justice at all—while we, if we hanged the wrong man, always endeavoured to make out the right one afterwards. There was little security for life, and none at all for property. The yeomen took sheep and cattle, but horses were handier for us—and for six months, in that line I did a rattling business.”

“Pleasant and profitable, no doubt.”

“Both combined,” said the sub-sheriff. “But there never was a man prosperous that others would not jump up and oppose him. The colonel tried his hand at it, and his want of common honesty proved my downfall.”

“How distressing!” I observed.

“As I told you, my horses were removed with delicacy, but the colonel plundered without discretion. When adopting a horse, I always gave preference to a Romanist or Quaker—safe people to do business with. The one you had only to call a rebel, and he was too happy to escape with life—the other, being a man of peace, submitted without a murmur. But the colonel was clumsy in his mode of business; to him rebel and royalist were the same—and every fish that came to his net was in season. He had no idea of stealing like a gentleman—and consequently, we were blown at last.

“‘Jack,’ says he, one morning, ‘you must cut your lucky and be off. That chestnut horse traced to me I have plastered upon you. No matter; all’s for the best; and do you take the blame. I’ll be sheriff next year, and you shall be the sub.’ He kept his word for once in his life—I got into office—and I have contrived to hold it these twenty years.”

"In your official situation, how much of life must have been revealed to you!"

"You may say that. If you wish to know what life in Ireland is, before and behind the curtain, inquire of the priest and the sheriff."

"Then yours must be a pleasant and a profitable office, Mr. Ryan."

"Not much pleasure, and no dignity at all—I am only a sort of upper hangman. There's another fellow of my own name, and, to distinguish us, they call me *Shawn Crughadore*.¹ It was once a profitable business, but the world's changed — my best customers are gone—and men who never paid a debt in the course of their life, have got a general discharge—by paying the debt of nature."

"Business was better twenty years ago?"

"Better!" exclaimed the red-nosed functionary. "When I began the trade, the devil a second house I met with in a morning's ride, but I could make a call in; and no

¹ *Anglice*—John the Hangman.

matter whether I had a writ in my pocket or not, as they were always expecting them, the thing was just the same. I mind one day I was returning from a road-sessions, and the devil a strap I had with me, good or bad, for I had forgot my pocket-book on the table. Well, as I was passing Dick Grady's, I thought I would make a call. I rode into the yard, and when a fellow spied me he bolted into the house, and, as the window was open, I heard what was passed.

“ ‘ Oh, murder !’ says the helper. ‘ *Shawn Crughadore's* in the yard.’

“ ‘ May the devil welcome him !’ says the master ; ‘ there's trouble comin when he's at hand. But, bad luck to him ! we must be civil,’ and out he comes. ‘ Jack, my darlin, but I'm delighted to see you.’

“ ‘ Are ye ?’ says I, with a wink—as much as to say, ‘ don't be overjoyed until ye know my errand.’

“ ‘ Won't ye alight and refresh yerself ?’ says he.

“ ‘ I don't care,’ says I, ‘ if I stop and feed the horse.’ So in we goes.

“ ‘ Take yer drink, *Shawn astore,*’ says Dick, ‘ and don't talk of business at present. I hear they're badly off about ye—slip that five-pound into the poor-box next Sunday.’

“ I put the bank-notes into my pocket quietly. ‘ Arrah then, Dick, dear, since ye're so charitable,’ says I, ‘ we'll let things stand as they are for a month or two.’

“ Well, my next visit was to Ned Kirwan's, a mile or two farther on. The moment I was seen riding down the avenue there was a general alarm. Ned cut out of the back-door, and took the bog like a grayhound—and when I lighted, I was smuggled into the parlour. Presently, in comes Mrs. Kirwan—locks the door upon us—and plumps down upon her knees to ask for mercy.

“ ‘ Oh, murder ! Mr. Ryan,’ says she, ‘ ye have children yerself, and you wouldn't be the ruin of poor Biddy.’

“ ‘ Me ruin poor Biddy !’ says I. ‘ Arrah, the devil a such notion’s in my head.’ ”

“ ‘ Ye don’t know my manin,’ says she. ‘ There’s a half-witted sort of a militia officer courtin our little girl in the front parlour, and we have persuaded him she’ll have a fortune at her father’s death ; but if you drive us ¹ till after the marriage, why we’ll be destroyed tee-totally. The devil as much money’s in the house at present as would buy a breakfast ; but, God bless ye, take a couple of bullocks, and give us time till after the fair of Foxford.’ ”

“ For fear of spoiling Biddy’s match with the *ommadawn* ² they had humbugged, I agreed, and retired under a shower of blessings richer by two bullocks and five pounds—and of all days in the year, I was on that one as harmless as a travelling *boccagh* ³. But see, isn’t that ould Father Thady turning down the road? There was a time when he would have been

¹ Seize on cattle.

² *Anglice*—Idiot.

³ A lame beggarman.

afraid to have met me—but as the old fellow was considered not worth powder and shot, the writ was never renewed, and is out of date these four years. Who knows but I'll knock a trifle out of his reverence for all that?"

My curiosity was excited: the sub-sheriff bundled out of the gig with an alacrity that surprised me. I followed—and the horse was committed to the care of two peasants we had encountered accidentally.

We walked forward to meet the priest. As far as evil spirits went, Father Thady had the character of being a game man, and it was affirmed that he did not value his satanic majesty a *traneetine*. Everybody is best in his vocation—and, although Thady had cleared two haunted houses of the devil, and cared for neither "white spirits or gray," in the course of my life I never witnessed such mortal alarm as the poor priest betrayed, when he unexpectedly encountered the sub-sheriff. The latter, in military parlance, took the initiative.

"Arrah! ye unfortunate ould man—what sins have ye committed that drove ye this mornin in my way?"

"Oh, murder, murder!" was the response; "I'm fairly ruined, I suppose. Arrah—Mr. Ryan, jewel—ye might spare me for this once?"

"Spare ye!" returned the upper hangman, indignantly; "there's ingratitude—haven't I kept o ut of your way these four years?"

"Oh! the gates of glory be open to ye, but ye have—but just this once," continued the old man, imploringly.

"Arrah, do ye want to ruin me?—don't ye see it's impossible? Is it let ye go in the presence of them two bailiffs, come down special from Dublin?"

"Oh! then," said the old man, with a groan, "there's nothing for it but to rot in jail—och, *willis thrue*! Bad luck attend that thief of a nephew that brought his poor uncle to this!"

"Amen!" responded the sub-sheriff; "but

you'll want to take a trifle of duds with you, to make yourself comfortable in prison."

"Oh, murder! and must I go to jail?"

"Arrah, the devil a help for it," returned Mr. Ryan; "but sorra one of me will let you walk; I'll give ye a lift in the gig. But what can ye do?—if half was paid down, I might get ye time for the remainder."

"If I could muster ten pound, it's the outside," returned the churchman.

"Ten pound — is it jokin ye are, Father Thady? and the debt above a hundred."

"Step up to the house," said the priest, "step up—every *scurrick* I'm worth in the world I'll give, rather than go to jail."

"Well, God sees I pity you," said the tender-hearted functionary of the law. "I'll just send the bailiffs out of the way to get a drink; and, if the captain will drive the gig to the barracks, I'll be there presently myself."

A trifling gratuity was given to the peasants, who trotted off. I mounted the gig—

drove to Ballysallagh—and left *Shawn Crughadore* to arrange matters with Father Thady.

Mr. Ryan was absent about an hour. The sentry directed him to my room ; and, after he had deposited a sooty bag upon the table, he drew a chair forward, and filled himself a glass of whisky and cold water.

“ Well, how did you settle matters with the priest ? ”

“ Oh, poor man ! I took what he offered, and made him happy for life, by assuring him I would never inquire for the balance,” was the reply. “ Here is the money in the leg of an old stocking, pulled out of a hole in the chimney.”

So saying, he turned the contents out upon the table—three or four guineas, a score of Spanish dollars, and several handfuls of ten-penny and fivepenny pieces, then the silver currency in Ireland. Many of the coins were discoloured even to blackness, and proved how long the old man must have been engaged in accumulating the little hoard.

I looked at Mr. Ryan.

"Have you no conscientious compunctions —no contrition for plundering the church?"

"Conscience! he repeated; "did you ever know a sub-sheriff to have any? I have made the old man happy at his escape from an imaginary jail — and of what use to him was this money while stuck in the cranny of a chimney? I'll put it into circulation — and that's a public benefit."

"You won't put it in the poor-box, like Mr. Kirwan's five pounds."

"It will be consigned to the same box, no doubt; but my gig is at the door. I hear you are to be immediately relieved; and, when you return to head-quarters, you'll find yourself without an hour's ride of mine. When time hangs idly on your hands, come to me—I'll give you *cead fealteagh*,¹ and the experience of half a century. No man has seen life in light and shadow more extensively than myself. I have had beauty kneeling at

¹ A hundred welcomes.

my feet — pride stooping abjectly to ask a favour—a peer has been beholden to me for the very bed he lay on—and a countess only used her carriage at my sufferance. Rest assured, that in this world none know the secret passages of private life, but—the priest and the sheriff.”

Mr. Ryan lifted the old stocking from the table—placed it behind him in the gig—squeezed my hand—and left Ballysallagh at an easy trot. I thought of what I had heard and what I had seen that morning, and determined to cultivate an intimacy with my new acquaintance.

CHAPTER II.

OCCURRENCES AT BALLYSALLAGH — I RENEW MY AC-
QUAINTANCE WITH THE SUB-SHERIFF — THE DUELLING
EXPERIENCES OF MR. EGAN.

Hand your hands—haud your hands—aneugh done!—
aneugh done!—the quarrel's no mortal.—ROB ROY.

The rout came. We were relieved by two unfortunates, with a half-company of “the king’s hard bargains.” The first sufferer was Captain Knowlton, a gentleman of the kid-skin school, who had seen service at Almack’s and the Opera, roughed it occasionally at Long’s, and held poteeine to be poisonous as prussic acid. Well, he was not exactly the man cut out for Ballysallagh. Nor was his “ancient” better suited for that service. He had come from the Suffolk militia when at

the wrong side of thirty-five, had been fifteen years with our regiment, and still was but half-way up the list of the lieutenants. If free from gouty visitations, he was certain of being in for a touch of sciatica—and these were unfavourable to operations confined to dark nights, and a country which, in Irish parlance, would “bog a snipe.” Had Captain Knowlton possessed free will, a foot, which he opined to be of exquisite proportion, should have never pressed a surface rougher than a Venetian carpet; while Lieutenant Bottomley would have abandoned the Queen’s drawing-room itself, for the luxurious repose which an easy hassock afforded to his afflicted extremities.

When a short but severe turn of duty had expired, and they returned to head-quarters, we were amply favoured with their melancholy experiences—the captain having discovered that Gilbert’s boots were not impervious to bog-water—and Mr. Bottomley being

strongly of opinion that he had got lumbago for life.

The ordinary occurrences which interested the society of Ballysallagh were not of that aristocratic character which are found in the columns of the *Court Journal* and *Morning Post*; but two events, immediately before Captain Knowlton had bidden that pleasant abiding-place (as he sincerely trusted) an eternal farewell, had caused a marvellous sensation. A coffin, fully ornamented with

“The scrolls that teach us to live and to die,”

had been found affixed to the proctor's door, conveying a mute but significant intimation to the respected proprietor, that it was full time his house should be set in order. The other was the unexpected demise of the priest. The immediate services of Father Thady being required by an old lady “in articulo mortis,” on entering his bed-room, the priest himself was found “past praying for,” and dead as Julius Cæsar. On in-

quiry, I learned that from the period of the friendly visit of *Shawn Crughadore*, Father Thady had never raised his head; and although the most extensive researches were made by his afflicted relations in box and cupboard, thatch and chimney, the money realised thereby had scarcely defrayed snuff and candles for the wake.

And yet, that Father Thady had not left the Easter offerings at least behind him, was considered unaccountable. He had been observed, through a chink in the window-shutter, depositing the same in the leg of a Connemara stocking—but not a trace of either could be found. An experienced thief, when he abstracts money, always throws the purse away; but the plunderer of the defunct churchman differed in general practice from his brotherhood. The Easter offerings were gone, and—*me ipso teste*—the Connemara stocking had accompanied them.

Since I had left Ballysallagh, I had seen nothing of Mr. Egan. A family occurrence

had rendered it necessary that I should obtain a two months' leave, and it was only on the preceding evening that I had returned. I walked into the town; and when deeply musing on the intelligence I had received from Captain Knowlton, who should I observe riding up the street on a chestnut-cob, fat and punchy as himself, but my quondam acquaintance, the sub-sheriff!

"Arragh! My dear friend, I'm delighted to see you!" exclaimed the law's functionary.

"The pleasure is mutual, Mr. Egan," I replied.

"I have heard men say as much," returned *Shawn Crughadore*, "when they wished me at the devil. But I believe ye, as there's nothing in the office against ye at present. And how are ye? Called twice at the barrack-gate—heard ye were away to bury an aunt—hope she died in the odour of sanctity, and left you enough to buy the step."

"She *did* remember me in her will. But, talking of the departed, have you heard the

news of Ballysallagh? and have you lately visited Father Thady?"

"I secured him against a second visit," he replied.

"Inasmuch as the first one killed him," I added, before he had finished the sentence.

"And is he dead?" asked Mr. Egan.

I nodded an affirmative. "And what he did with the old stocking and its contents has added considerably to the sorrow of his afflicted relatives. But have you no compunctions? — no contrition for robbing the church? — no fear of encountering the old gentleman some night upon the highway, to re-demand a false levy — the Easter offerings and Connemara stocking?"

"None in the world," returned Mr. Egan.

"Then you are a brave man."

"I never had that character before," said the sub-sheriff.

"What! you a soldier, and in an Irish militia regiment?"

"Just so. They were all fire-eaters, with

a few exceptions; and every man who was inclined to quarrel had a customer ready to take him up. I had the reputation of being shy; and therefore people who really wanted to fight never wasted time upon me."

"What a comfort to belong to a fighting corps!"

"All were duellists but myself and a few others. I remember, when the regiment was disbanded, that, in the distribution of the mess-plate, a dispute arose about a marrow-spoon, and the colonel and a junior lieutenant fired three shots before it could be satisfactorily adjusted."

"What a pleasant corps! How lucky you were to escape these calls of honour!"

"I was only once out," returned *Shawn Crughadore*.

"Oh! you fought, then?"

"Faith I took care not to fight; I merely went out as second—simply aided and abetted—and no man ever called upon me afterwards."

“Fatal meeting, I presume.”

“Quite the contrary. But I’ll give you the particulars. There were few militia corps without an assortment of loose lads, but our regiment had more scamps than any in the kingdom; but all were small fry compared to two superlative scoundrels. To Tom D’Arcy, a word of truth never could be traced, from the time he was a schoolboy; and Jack Daly had such a taste for plunder, that, sooner than be idle, if he could not manage to rob a church, he would steal a pinafore off a child. Both were notorious cowards—and both would be bullies if they dared. We were heartily sick of the pair; and all we wanted was a decent opportunity to give both of them the road; and, faith! that came at last. In playing ‘blind hookey,’ each had endeavoured to cheat the other; the lie passed more currently than bank-notes on the occasion; they squabbled down stairs, and finished with a couple of rounds in the barrack-yard — a beautiful example to the

sergeant's guard, who were lookers-on at the gate.

“ Well, before I was up next morning, I heard the whole story of the *rookawn* (row) from my servant; and before I had dressed myself for parade, who should drop in but Tom D'Arcy himself. He had a dark ring round his left eye, which told that he had lately been in trouble, and I remarked that he was pale as a ghost besides.

“ ‘ What's wrong with you ? ’ says I, good-naturedly. ‘ I can't say that your general appearance is much improved by that beauty-spot. Troth ! I would recommend you to get a leech or two from the doctor before you show upon parade.’

“ Well, he began a cock-and-bull story, all to prove that he was honest as the sun, and that, compared with Jack Daly, Balf the robber was a gentleman. ‘ I suppose, however,’ said he, with a sigh, ‘ that it will be expected by the regiment that I'll call him out.’

“ ‘Oh, indeed, there can be no difference of opinion about that,’ I answered.

“ ‘Then, Jack, *mavourneein*,¹ you’ll be my friend, won’t ye?’

“ ‘Egad! I didn’t like that. I was dying to get the scoundrel shot—but I would rather have been a looker-on than a principal. Well, I was hemming and hawing before I gave an answer, when a knock comes to the door, and in walks the Adjutant. Tom’s face grew paler—all but the eye.

“ ‘Mr. D’Arcy, I am directed by the Colonel to place you in arrest. Go to your quarters, and send your sword to the orderly room.’

“ He pointed to the door. Tom took the hint, and made himself scarce.

“ ‘Now, Egan,’ says the Adjutant, ‘the Colonel wants ye immediately. Don’t mind sash or sword, for the business is particular,’ and off he went.

“ I found the Colonel alone.

¹ An Irish term of endearment.

“ ‘ Jack,’ says he, ‘ D’Arcy has been with ye—I know the business, and you must go out with him.’ ”

“ I looked rather grave—told the Colonel I would be anxious to oblige him—but D’Arcy’s was not a quarrel that, as a man of honour, I could engage in.

“ The Colonel looked at me with a smile.

“ ‘ Arrah! *bedershin!*’ says he. ‘ You and honour may be married when you please—there’s no relationship between ye, and nobody will forbid the bans. Have done, Jack—*Tiggum tigue Teigeeine.*’¹

“ ‘ If you wish me to go out, I suppose I must—but if anything occurs—if D’Arcy’s shot....’ ”

“ ‘ Why,’ interrupted the Colonel, ‘ in that case, ye’ll get the thanks of the regiment; and if you could manage to have Daly left quivering on a daisy also, you’ll be voted a

¹ A figurative phrase, meaning, “ we understand each other.” Literally, “ *Tim understands Teady.* ”

piece of plate, as sure as my name's Hector O'Donnel.'

" ' Well, I'll do what I can for the good of the service,' says I.

" ' I hear the other scoundrel has searched the barracks for a second, and none of the lads will take him in hand. If all fail, I'll provide him with the quarter-master. In his last half-yearly account, there's a mistake or two against the regiment that would smash him—and he'll not refuse any trifle I require.'

" ' But they are both under arrest, and you would not let them fight in the barracks, I suppose?'

" ' Troth! rather than disappoint them, I would let them settle the matter in the turf-yard—God be with the time, when men could have the use of the barrack-yard, and the surgeon, too, if they required it. It's thirty years ago—I was a boy, and junior ensign in the 53rd—old Colonel Burnes had the regiment—stiff as a spontoon—they call me a tight hand—I couldn't hold a candle to him—

and he was brave as a game-cock. Well, we were quartered in Tralee—the great election of '86 came on—party ran high—the votes were pretty equal—on both sides there were fire-eaters enough—and, as the contest became more doubtful, duels increased, and there were fights every day. At last, a Mac Gillicuddy of the Reeks ran against a Blennerhasset on the courthouse steps—some said by accident, and others by design—a message was given and accepted on the spot—friends and pistols were easily had—but the difficulty was, as to where the gentleman could fight peaceably and undisturbed, the mob on both sides being uncontrollable. Some one proposed the barrack-yard, and an application made to Colonel Burnes was instantly complied with. They fought with closed gates, and the regiment looking on. An exchange of shots—one slight hit—some blood—no damage—shake hands—wound dressed—lunch in the mess-room—everything gentlemanly and quiet—some comfort fighting that way. But now for D'Arcy.

The first thing to do, is to get the thing on—the next, to get it over.'

" ' Very well,' replied I, ' I'll do it to oblige you.'

" ' As their names are posted in the sentry-box, they could not pass that way out of barracks—but there's the key of the side-wicket leading into the park—you can smuggle them out—and I'll take care nobody shall see you.'

" I took the key and was leaving the room, when the Colonel called me back.

" ' One word, Jack—I have enough against Daly to break him—and if you can get D'Arcy shot, it will save a second court-martial in the regiment, and look all the better. When ye mark the ground, take short steps, and stick the devils as close together as you can—and if the sun's in your friend's eyes—why don't lose time by objecting to it.'

" I gave an assenting nod—but, as I returned to my quarters, and began to remember the Colonel's directions, I thought to myself it was very like murder we had been planning."

To this observation I gave a hearty assent, and the sub-sheriff thus continued :

“ Well, I took the message—followed Daly to the inn—for after trying everybody in barracks, he had taken a twist through the town, and divil a one, good nor bad, would have anything to say to him. When I found him regularly bothered, I was for instant satisfaction—but in five minutes afterwards my courage underwent a change.

“ While I was hectoring as if I would have fought myself, up drove a *shandradan*,¹ and who should step out but Dan Kellett of Mount Durneeine, the biggest villain at the time unchanged—but, glory to the Virgin ! he had his neck stretched afterwards, when the French surrendered at Ballanamuck.

“ Mr. Kellett was a broth of a boy, as they call it in this country. He generally spent two or three months of the year in Mount Durneeine, and the remainder in the county jail—sometimes, under suspicion of debt, but,

¹ *Anglice*, an ill-appointed carriage.

more commonly, for assault and battery. He would ride twenty miles to see a man hanged, and fifty to be present at a duel. He used to bless God, that no quarrel in which he ever was engaged had been amicably arranged; and, although in general matters nobody would believe him upon oath, in this case his assertion was undoubted. He was returning home, after a probation of a twelvemonth in "the stone jug," for half-murdering a coroner who had endeavoured to arrest him, and great was Mr. Daly's delight when he recognized his old and respectable acquaintance, who appeared in the very nick of time.

"These worthies retired a few paces, and I could perceive, from the action employed by both, that Mr. Daly was detailing his affair with D'Arcy, requesting Mr. Kellett's friendly offices, and receiving a very gracious consent. Of all the lads in Galway, this same Mr. Kellett was the last man against whom I would have been pitted if I could have helped it, and from the bottom of my heart I wished

him in Roscommon jail, or at the devil—and I would have obliged him with free choice of either—but the jump was made, and I was beautifully in for it.

“ ‘ Mr. Egan,’ said the owner of Mount Durneeine, as he approached me, and rubbed his fingers through whiskers a foot long and of a fiery red, that made them more alarming, ‘ I have heard a sketch of this affair, and we’ll have great pleasure in giving satisfaction. Sooner a thing comes off the better; and, as I’m in haste home, we’ll be waiting for you behind the pound in half an hour. My friend tells me ye were in a hell of a hurry, so, of course, ye’r ready to come to the scratch. Hand me the tool-chest.’ The driver took a pistol-case out of the *shandradan*. ‘ And now I’ll just step in to rince the cobwebs out of my throat, and be ready for you in a jiffy.’

“ I returned to the barracks, and, upon my conscience! my reflections were anything but pleasant. I was up to the neck in trouble, and

no way to get out of it; and I consigned D'Arcy, Daly, Kellett, and the Colonel to the devil in one batch. That infernal villain, fresh from Roscommon jail, where he was obliged, against his inclination, to be peaceable, no doubt was dying for an opportunity to make up lost time. As if the scoundrel was not dangerous enough, he had gone in to prime himself with whisky; and if I coughed or looked crooked, it would be 'Mr. Egan, I'll trouble ye for satisfaction—no time like the present.'—'Arrah! Jack,' says I, spakin to myself, 'ye have made a Judy Fitzsummon's mother of yerself this blessed mornin—ye common *ommadawn*, what had you to do with affairs of honour?'

"When I mentioned Kellett's name to D'Arcy, I thought he would have fainted.

" 'Oh, Jack!' says he, 'there will be murder.'

" 'Arrah! the devil a truer word ever ye uttered,' said I.

" D'Arcy looked pale as a table-cloth—

for, if there was a spark of courage in him before, the very name of Kellett had frightened it away.

“ ‘ What’s to be done ? ’ says he.

“ ‘ Would ye have any objection to make an apology ? ’ says I.

“ ‘ How could that be ? ’ he asked.

“ I saw he was dying to do it all the time.
‘ Ye know I was kicked,’ says he.

“ ‘ Faith ! and,’ says I, ‘ ye’ll be shot into the bargain, if ye have any luck at all.’

“ Well, time was short, and D’Arcy consented. Off we set for the pound, taking the pistols with us for form sake, but fully determined that no powder should be burned—and, when we reached the place, there were Daly and his coadjutor waiting to receive us. Just as I had expected, Kellett had five inches of whisky in him, and was ready for war ; and swaggering over to me with his nose in the air,

“ ‘ I presume,’ said he, ‘ there’s nothing to

be done, but step the ground and load the marking-irons.'

" ' An ample apology,' says I, ' may save that trouble.'

" ' An apology!' says he. ' Arrah! young man—what a *gommogue*¹ you must be! An apology! and powder not squibbed! Don't ye wish ye may get one? After a couple of shots, maybe I might talk to ye on the subject.'

" The ruffian had totally mistaken me, and thought that I had come to demand, what I was quite ready to offer him.

" ' I am prepared,' says I, ' to . . . '

" ' I know you are, and so are we:' and you would have thought he would have snapped the head off me. Well, before I could get further, fortune stood to us like a brick, and when I thought our disgrace was certain, we came off with flying colours.

" At that time, you must know that, in Connaught, for one man that would go to

¹ *Anglice*, simpleton.

mass, three would go to see a duel: and there were five hundred of the townspeople collected. The better class paid a penny to the keeper, and got a seat on the pound wall, while the tag-rag were gathered round us. At this moment, half a dozen stout fellows, each with a *boulteeine*¹ in his fist that would have felled an ox, pushed fair and asy through the crowd, and jumped suddenly on Mr. Kellett as a cat would on a canary.

“ ‘ What do ye mane, ye scoundrels?’ says he, half choked between passion and the pressure of their knuckles.

“ ‘ Mane! ye infernal thief?’ exclaimed a little black-a-vised man, popping up at Kellett’s elbow; ‘ I mane that you are under the screw—and before the sun sets, that ye’ll be able to tell whether there’s better accommodation in Trim jail than in Roscommon.’

“ Arrah! who do ye suppose the wee man was? Divil another than the coroner whom Kellett had half kilt the year before. He

¹ A heavy stick.

knew the day that Kellett would get out, and thinking the scoundrel had been too comfortable in Roscommon, he was ready waiting for him in Meath. Well, seeing how fortune had saved us, I turned round to D'Arcy, who was pale as cambric handkerchief. 'Arrah! bad luck to ye,' says I, 'look bould as a lion, y'er safe for this time!' and I steps forward to the coroner and his followers.

" 'May I inquire the cause of this interruption?' I said, with a flourish of the head.

" 'Suspicion of debt,' replied the little black-a-vised man, 'and here's my authority,' pulling out a foot of parchment.

" 'Really—it's particularly unpleasant,'—I observed; 'could you oblige him with an hour? When our friends had settled a small previous account, for some impertinent remarks made by Mr. Kellett on the ground, I intended to have a couple of shots at him before we parted.'

" 'I tell you what,' said the coroner, 'if

half a minute would save him from the gallows, the villain should not have the quarter, and here comes the chaise.'

" ' If the debt were moderate, rather than be disappointed, I would pay it myself,' I observed carelessly.

" ' Blood and turf! isn't that a sportin offer!' exclaimed the mob; ' isn't his honour raal game?'

" D'Arcy heard my overture, and, thunder-struck, came up and whispered in my ear, ' Are ye mad? The devil might tempt the coroner to take ye at your word.'

" ' Don't be uneasy,' says I in return. ' If thirty shillings would set him loose, I wouldn't go further than a pound.'

" ' The debt, sir,' said the little dark man, ' is three hundred and eighty-seven pounds fourteen and threepence, with caption-fees and...."

" ' Ye may stop where ye are,' I replied. ' Mr. Kellett, ye may bless God for your deliverance, or in half an hour ye would have been

quivering on a daisy,' I said, addressing the prisoner, whom they were hurrying to the carriage.

“‘The moment I am at liberty, Mr. Egan, you shall hear from me.’

“‘Ah then, Mr. Egan,’ added the coroner, ‘in the mean time I would advise you to keep your hand in practice. If three hundred and eighty-seven pence, instead of pounds, would get the scoundrel out of quod, he couldn’t manage to raise half the money. Mount Durneeine, as he calls a roofless house and a hundred acres of brown heather, would never have sold for a thousand pounds, and it’s mortgaged for more than three. Devil a thing will set him at large but a general jail delivery. Have you any commands for Trim?’

“‘This is too bad,’ said I, addressing the mob who were collected, ‘to have my feelings wounded, and not receive satisfaction on the spot. Well, I have come to a resolution, and nobody will make me break it. By this

book,' and I kissed the handle of the pistol, which, by the bye, I had never ventured to touch until I saw Kellett gripped by the coroner — 'I'll never be second after this to man, woman, or child — and let nobody ask me!'

“ ‘ Ah then, y'er honour, but we'r sorry for yur disappointment,' said one scoundrel who came to see me shot.

“ ‘ The devil a too late is it yet to rescue Kellett and have the fight,' exclaimed another.

“ ‘ Be gogstay ! and ye're right, *Philibeen*. If we cut quick across the fields, we'll catch the shay at the cross-road.'

“ ‘ Oh, murder !' whispered D'Arcy, ' the villains will never let us return home without blood.'

“ ‘ They'll see none of ours,' I replied, ' so don't be uneasy. Gentlemen,' said I, ' I'm eternally obliged to ye—but, as ye might get into trouble, I'll bear my disappointment, and suffer in silence like a man.'

“ ‘Arrah !’ observed a fourth, ‘ isn’t his honour a considrit gintleman ? Be all that’s beautiful ! we’ll chair him home.’ ”

“ This was too much for modesty like mine to stand, and I protested against it ; but ye might as well have attempted to keep out the tide with a pitchfork. Seven or eight ruffians, strong enough to lift the mail-coach, shouldered me in a moment. Away we went—tag-rag and bob-tail, three hundred after us ; and as we traversed the town, every idler joined the procession. The sentry heard the uproar — called out that the general was come unexpectedly — and the sergeant turned out the guard.

“ ‘ What is all this ?’ inquired Colonel O’Donnel at the adjutant.

“ ‘ Either the French have landed, or both the scoundrels are shot. But, no—Saint Andrew !—is it possible ?’ exclaimed the little Scotchman, as I made my entrance in state. In another minute I was in the presence of the Colonel.

“ ‘Now, what the devil is this all about?’ he exclaimed. ‘You sneaked out of the side wicket like a cur with a kettle tied to him, and you return through the grand gate like a regular conqueror.’

“ ‘The mob are always bloodthirsty,’ says I; ‘and, seeing me bent upon murder, they paid me the compliment you saw.’

“ ‘Humph!’ grunted the Colonel; ‘but, Jack, make me happy before you go farther, by telling me there’s one of the scoundrels grassed.’

“ ‘Arrah! the devil a one of them. I tried my best to get both shot; and, when it failed me, I challenged Kellett, out of pure disappointment.’

“ ‘*You* challenge Kellett!’ he roared.

“ ‘Faith! Colonel—it’s a weakness, and I can’t help it. I never see a pistol half-a-yard long, and a fire-eater at the end of it, but I lose all control over my temper and become desperate. If that blackguard, the coroner, hadn’t carried off Kellett by main

force, before this time I would have been enabled to read the *Dublin Evening Post* through his carcase.'

"The little Adjutant left the room, and the Colonel fixed his eyes upon me like a pointer at a partridge. 'Jack!' says he, 'by everything that's amiable, ye'r the biggest villain at this moment unhangd. *You* fight a fellow that wouldn't wait for morning to go out, but finished Bob Hardyman by candle-light in the gateway of the Red Cow! Oh! *monasin diaoul!* if your impudence doesn't bang Bannagher, out and out.'

"Well, there was no use in trying it on the Colonel, and so I told him the whole story.

" ' 'Pon my soul,' says I, 'I little fancied, when I slipped out of the side gate with a heavy heart, that I would get back without being kicked off the ground by Kellett, and pelted into the barrack by the mob. But luck's everything—and, as I have got a fighting character by mere accident, I hope ye'll just leave matters as they stand.'

“ ‘ Ah then, Jack dear,’ says he, ‘ I’ll not rob you of your laurels.’ ”

“ ‘ Faith ! and if ye don’t,’ says I, ‘ I’ll take care that nobody will. The man who finds me upon the field of glory a second time, will rise early in the morning ; for, if I hear that there will be a duel in Galway, I’ll slip into Roscommon the night before, and sleep snug and warm with the Shannon between us.’ ”

“ Upon my honour, Mr. Egan,” I remarked, “ no man earned ‘ the bubble reputation ’ more cheaply than yourself.”

“ And do ye suppose,” inquired the sub-sheriff, “ that I am the only coward who has humbugged the world, and passed current as a desperado ? Ah, my dear sir, if half the swaggerers ye meet with were examined, ye would find an ass’s hide lurking beneath their lion’s skin. Believe me, Captain, *Shawn Crughadore* is not the only man in Connaught who has an antipathy to gunpowder and cold iron.”

“ But, touching Messrs: Daly and D'Arcy, what was the result ?”

“ Oh, the scoundrels !—we got shot of both. Daly was cashiered by sentence of court-martial, and the other fellow resigned. D'Arcy turned rebel and was transported; and poteeine sent Daly to the other world in double quick. But who does that young woman want? You or me, Captain?”

“ *You*, of course; ‘none but the brave deserve the fair.’ ”

“ Ah, then, I suppose that's the reason that none of them would listen to me when I was on the look-out for an heiress in my youth. My pretty girl, what's your business with me?”

Whatever the business was that the pretty girl had with the sub-sheriff must remain a secret, gentle reader, until the next chapter discloses it.

CHAPTER III.

LEGAL REVELATIONS—THE PAINTER'S WIFE.

Fal.—I have misused the king's press damnably.

* * * *

Hostess.—Master Fang, have you entered the action?

Fang.—It is entered.

Hostess.—Where is your yeoman? It is a lusty yeoman? Will a' stand t' it?

SHAKSPEARE.

To man, woman is ever an object of deep interest, and circumstances enhance it. The noontide of brilliant beauty arrests the fancy—but its sunset, when clouded by sickness or by sorrow, touches the best feelings of nature, and strikes directly to the heart. I have ridden unmoved across a battle-field—death had been busy there—"the horse and his rider had fallen"—and heaps of human carrion, utterly denuded by the wretches who hang

upon the footsteps of an army, exposed to nightly dews and ardent suns, had become offensive equally to sight and smell. The green tint which announces putrescency—the swollen proportions of forms three days before admirable for their symmetry—the tainted air—the brutal vultures, gorged but dissatisfied, and flagging lazily away, but only far enough to let the column pass—the ribald jests of ruffian soldiers—and of that foulest thing—savage woman—at these, all combined, the lip curled in disgust, but they evoked no softer sympathies. Years passed, when with an invalid relation I visited an English watering-place. There were others there in search of health; and one, from the hour when I saw her, excited a peculiar interest.

Harriette Beresford was not yet nineteen. I loved her—not with the love that man gives the living, but—the dead.

“The autumn leaf will wither on her grave,” said the doctor, in answer to my hurried inquiry, as he left the chamber of his

patient, and hastened from an examination which confirmed his worst fears, and told him that hope was over.

“ And yet she looked so much better last evening. The rose coloured her pale cheek, and...”

“ Hectic, sir,” was the reply—“ mere gilding on the sepulchre. A consumption—and one more deadly and more rapid I have never witnessed during a practice of thirty years. One brief month—and...”

He did not finish the sentence—there was no occasion—I understood the rest too well.

Harriette that day did not join the dinner party—but when I retired to the drawing-room I found her on the sofa, and her mother seated beside her with her daughter's hand in hers.

“ Captain, does not Harriette look so much better?” and the smile of hope accompanied the question.

She was indeed perfectly beautiful; the eye was singularly brilliant, and the cheek tinted

with the very flush of loveliness. I sat down beside her, and took her hand in mine. In man's attentions to a woman, there can be little mystery, and her mother read mine correctly—deep, anxious, ardent sympathy—without one particle of earthly love. Harriette turned her soft and sparkling eye on mine.

“Captain,” she said, “I will repay your delicious grapes and your sweet bouquet. You shall be my first partner at my first ball; and in a month, I will claim the promise of your arm, and walk with you daily on the heath.”

A shudder crept over me—I recollected the doctor's prognostic in the morning. A month!—her partner would be the worm—she would cross the heath, not on my arm, but in a coffin. I became agitated—when fortunately the roll of a carriage gave an excuse for rising abruptly from the sofa.

“Oh! some fresh arrival,” I said, as I sprang up and hurried to the window. It was a hearse with white plumes, and a dozen

idle scoundrels seated on the top, smoking cigars, and driving at a long trot home, after what they call, in undertakers' slang, 'performing a funeral.' In one short month that carriage bore the sweet and patient sufferer to 'that bourn from which no traveller returns.' "

" But, my dear Captain, what has all this to do with the sub-sheriff and the pretty girl?"

Gentle reader! be patient—or, if you will hurry other people's cattle, I will stop short in my narrative, and leave you miserable for life.

" Well, *astore!*" said Mr. Egan, " whether is myself or the Captain here, the gentleman you seem to have some business with?"

" You—*you*," was the hurried reply.

" And what do you want with me?"

" To save me from despair," she replied, clasping her hands together in an agony of distress. " Yonder horrid men are waiting to arrest my poor broken-hearted husband.

Oh! as you hope for mercy hereafter, save Henry from a gaol!"

"The request is easy made," returned *Shawn Crughadore*; "but it's rather a hard job to keep some gentlemen out of one."

The entreaty of the girl had caused me to look round at the persons she had alluded to. One was a man far advanced in years, who had the appearance of a hedge schoolmaster, or priest's clerk. The expression of the face was sly and quiet, submissive and passionless, indicating a disposition that neither praise nor abuse could rouse. He wore a dingy black coat, and a brownish wig, which was so dried and furzy, that, if constructed of human hair, which seemed doubtful, it must have passed the winter in a baker's oven. He had the stump of a pen stuck behind his ear, and a hat above it, that looked as if he had been erstwhile the property of a Quaker. His companion was a young man—and look, air, and manner bespoke him a thorough-bred blackguard.

“ Who are these fellows ?” I inquired.

“ Two gentlemen at present on my establishment,” returned Mr. Egan.

“ The old one looks a cunning knave—the young one a superlative scoundrel.”

“ ’Pon my conscience ! you have hit their characters to a T. Ned’s beautiful at the book. He’s the best hand at an alibi in Connaught ; he’ll swear that the night before he was in company with a man who, at the same time, was snug and warm in Jamaica.”

“ The younger gentleman—is he equally accomplished ?”

“ Quite a different line of business his. He’s no use at *the primmer*, for nobody would believe him upon oath. But then he has other good qualities which make him invaluable. He’ll serve a writ when another dare not venture within musket-shot of the premises. It was Patsey that brought mad Burke to the hammer. Devil a writ could be served, good or bad ; they were all desperadoes at Kinsallagh—the master never stirred an

inch without a brace of pistols, nor the men without a pitchfork in their fists; and the only choice a bailiff had, was between an ounce of lead and six inches of cold iron. Well, what did Patsey do? Pretends he was going across the mountain to buy Connemara stockings, and asked liberty to step in and take a coal for his pipe out of the kitchen fire."

" ' Ye have no paper about ye ? ' says one fellow, suspiciously, coming up with a pitchfork in his hand, and followed by another scoundrel with a flail.

" ' Arrah ! the devil a scrap,' says he, ' only this wee bit to light the *dhudeeine* with.'

" So he takes the copy of the writ out of his pocket, and lights the tobacco with it. Well, after he drew the pipe awhile, not to show that he was in a hurry, up he gets, puts on his hat fair and easy, bade ' God bless all there, barrin the cat,' and left the house unsuspected. In a month or two down comes the execution — and you may guess Mr.

Burke's astonishment, when one blessed morning, with twenty police and half a score of drivers, I cleared out cloot and horn, not leaving behind as much as would supply milk for the teapot."

"What a scoundrel—a deliberate perjurer."

"Not at all," said Mr. Egan. "Didn't he leave the writ in the house, or the ashes of it?—and that's all as one."

"I'm afraid I can't agree to your theory of serving writs. I suppose the scoundrels are well rewarded for their infamous exertions?"

"At times they do get a trifle to encourage them—but it's a slavish life—one day half-murdered by the women, and the next whole-murdered by the men. Dragged through a bog-hole here—flung out of a window there—besides being tossed in a blanket, and eating the original..."

"Stop, for Heaven's sake! Eating the original—what's that?"

"And you don't know the difference between an original and the copy?" and he

crossed himself piously. "Och! murder! how your education has been neglected!" ejaculated *Shawn Crughadore*—"or a Ca, sa, from a Fi, fa."

"As much as I know which is the most fashionable hotel in Timbuctoo."

"You're not too old to learn," said the sub-sheriff.

"I fear I am."

"Not if you take the short process that I'll recommend you."

"I am all attention," I replied.

"Have you a book? as the turf people call it."

"No."

"Make one immediately."

I shook my head.

"Do you?" and Mr. Egan described by a movement of his wrist and elbow the shaking of a dice-box.

"I never tumble the ivory by any chance," was the reply.

"They'll give you instructions in any club-

house—and, if you wish to hurry matters, set up shop, and take an opera girl for your housekeeper. In a couple of years, I'll engage under a penalty you name, that you shall understand the difference between a 'green wax' and 'the grace of God' as well as if you had served five years to an attorney."

"But have you no qualms of conscience, Mr. Egan? That old sinner is hurrying to the grave, and the young scoundrel preparing for the gallows."

"Troth, I agree with you in opinion, that if Patsey hasn't the best of luck, he's likely to spoil a market."

"Spoil a market!" I exclaimed, "what do you mean?"

"Why, in the good old times, when a man was to be hanged, the judge always fixed a market day for the execution. If the people had any thing to buy or sell, they could do it, and have a little pleasure into the bargain—it was a mixture of business and innocent amusement. Ah! God be with that day.

I have strapped up eleven men at one assizes, and never reckoned the hanging money then under a hundred a-year."

"That branch of your business is not so lucrative at present," I remarked.

"Pish!" said the sub-sheriff, contemptuously, "it's not worth a ten pound note. Two murders in a twelvemonth! Arrah! my dear captain, what's that to pay rent and taxes with?"

"But could you not carry on business without the assistance of those brace of scoundrels?" I inquired.

"Impossible!" returned *Shawn Crughadore*. "We are liable, now and then, to make a bit of a mistake—a wrong caption or an illegal distraint—grip one Jack Blake instead of another, or drive *Shemus More* instead of *Shemus Beg*¹—and nothing gets us out of trouble like a smart affidavit."

"And that is done by the old villain in the wig?" I said, inquiringly.

¹ Big James instead of Little James.

"And in that very wig lies Ned's respectability."

"To estimate the value of one by the other, I should hold both very cheap," I observed.

"Indeed," said *Shawn Crughadore*, "I admit the wig is not constructed upon mechanical principles, and, like an ill-fitted saddle, it's always shifting forward. I'll recommend Ned to put a crupper to it, as an improvement."

"You admit, however, that the old gentleman is pretty certain of a warm corner, you know where—and that the younger scoundrel will be hanged?"

"I think not," returned Mr. Egan. "Patsey Lynch has an antipathy to the rope, and he'll hardly venture on anything beyond fourteen years' transportation. Indeed, only his friend in the wig there swore as pretty an *alibi* for him last assizes as ever was heard in court, Patsey would now be able to tell you how sea-air agreed with his constitution. It would be a pity, too. He's an industrious devil in

his way, and, sooner than be idle, he would transport his own brother for half-a-crown."

"Good Heaven!" muttered a feeble voice, "and is my unfortunate husband in the power of such a wretch?"

While *Shawn Crughadore* has been detailing the respective merits of his aids-de-camp, I had been examining, and with attention, the countenance and figure of the poor supplicant beside us, and both were so favourable, that, before I knew aught of her story or her sorrows, my feelings were warmly engaged. She was young—probably two-and-twenty—and pale and faded as her features were, you still might trace beauty in their ruin. No colour was in the lip—no brightness in the eye—but the mouth was small and pretty, and the eyes soft and expressive. The attenuated outline of her person still showed enough to prove that once it had been of excellent proportions—and she had a profusion of that classic hair, whose hue "in olden time" was termed by poets "paly gold." To give to her distress

additional interest, there were matronly appearances incident to married life, which, to use Scott's words, announced that "she now required from man a double care."

As Mr. Egan descanted on the merits of his staff, the colour faded from her cheeks, and convulsive twitchings agitated her pallid face ; until, startled by the broken observation, Mr. Egan turned round, and exclaimed, "*Mona-sindiaoul !* Captain, the poor girl's fainting !"

Fainting she was. She reeled a step forward, and would have fallen had I not sprang forward and caught her in my arms. A public-house was immediately beside us, and there we conveyed her, half carried and half supported. In the little parlour we placed her on a settle ; water and wine were administered, and in a few minutes she had perfectly recovered. During this short scene, I was struck with the warm solicitude that Mr. Egan exhibited, and I began to suspect that he was one of those personages—and they are not rare in society—who affect an indif-

ference to the sufferings of others which in reality they do not feel, and, under an assumed insensibility to human sorrow, conceal from public view a heart teeming with benevolence.

I was not wrong in my suspicions; and a more extended knowledge of *Shawn Crughadore* proved, as they say in Ireland, that "his heart was in the right place."

While I was still offering the invalid my assistance as she recovered, Mr. Egan had stepped out. He returned presently with a paper in his hand, and, turning to me, observed, "It's only a decree for five pounds. Don't be uneasy," he continued, addressing the poor stranger. "Let your husband keep out of my way, and I'll not send to look for him; but, *tiggum thu!*¹ the sooner he is out of my bailiwick the better."

"Alas!" said the poor girl, comprehending Mr. Egan's intimation that it would be necessary to quit the country, "we have not the means to travel. Henry set out early this

¹ Do you understand me?

morning to finish a miniature for a lady in the neighbourhood. He will get a guinea for it, and—" she sighed heavily, "we postponed breakfast until he came back. I heard by accident that he would be arrested, and..."

"Oh! d—n arrests!" exclaimed the sub-sheriff, jumping up. "Poor soul! fasting at one o'clock;" and in English and Irish he called hastily for refreshments.

Tea was speedily brought in, and I suggested that we should leave the stranger to herself, and take a turn or two in the public walk. Mr. Egan assented—rose—went to the window—fumbled with some papers—took out what by a side-look I saw was a bank-note—crossed to the table—threw an under-glance towards me to see that he was not observed—and then, as if he were slipping a billet-doux to a ward of Chancery, he threw the crumpled note across the table, and hurried away like a man who had abstracted one of the silver spoons.

In a quarter of an hour we returned. The

assurance that her husband was safe from arrest, with a comfortable breakfast, had in a great degree restored the poor unknown; and, with great modesty, but in the language of a gentlewoman, she returned thanks for our attention; and a hint from Mr. Egan, whose curiosity had been powerfully excited, produced the following disclosure. It was occasionally discursive, or interrupted with bursts of agony, as the happiness of the past was placed in painful contrast with the misery of the present—and the narrative ran thus:

“I am the only child of a baronet—the family ancient, the estates small. My father had an only brother, who had made a fortune in the Indies, and, strange coincidence, he too left an only son. From infancy, our parents had betrothed us—and from our earliest years we were informed that we were destined for each other. I have no remembrance of my mother; she died soon after my birth, and I was brought up in total seclusion, for my father is a man of gloomy and retiring habits.

My education was strictly private, and at eighteen I had never been seven miles from Lewisham Abbey. My cousin, and intended husband, was plain and very delicate, and younger than myself by a year. An intimacy between us was encouraged; but I sincerely believe that our feelings towards each other were reciprocated—and that each was thoroughly indifferent to the other.

“ With the exception of the clergyman’s family, my uncle, and my destined husband, the abbey received no visitors. The advances of the neighbouring gentry were politely repelled—I mixed not in society—knew nothing of the world—and at eighteen years of age, had never slept beneath a roof except that under which I had been born.

“ Circumstances, prospectively connected with my cousin starting for the county, changed suddenly my course of life; and a few of the neighbouring families were invited to our house, and were visited by us in return. With much reluctance, my father yielded to

the solicitations of a lady resident within a few miles, and permitted me, under her *surveillance*, to attend the County ball.

“ That was the fatal epoch of my life—poverty and suffering resulted from it—and yet, were the deed to be done again, my heart tells me I would do it.

“ It was an ordinary County ball, but to me it seemed the most brilliant fête imaginable. The gentry for miles around had collected ; and, as the town was the head-quarters of a cavalry regiment, their officers and band were present. One—a young lieutenant—was particularly attentive to me. He danced with me, sat beside me at supper, conducted me to the carriage, and, in a word, made a first impression on a heart that hitherto had never seen nor even fancied the object it might love.

“ He strove to gain an introduction to my father, but that was peremptorily refused ; and from my cousin's report, who had witnessed the attentions of the young dragoon,

my father again retired into seclusion, and barred his doors against the world anew.

“ One morning I was called down to his study unexpectedly, and there found him engaged in conversation with a stranger.

“ ‘ My dear Caroline,’ said my father, ‘ this young man is an artist, and he has persuaded me to have a likeness taken—I shall also have a miniature of you. He says he can execute both in a few sittings, and he shall commence with you.’

“ I bowed an assent to my father, and for the first time turned my eyes to the window where the artist was standing. He turned his face suddenly — and, heavens! in the painter I recognized my admirer at the County ball, the young dragoon !

“ I felt the blood rush to my very brow—my limbs trembled—and my agitation could not have escaped my father’s observation, had not a servant at the moment called him from the apartment.

“ The door had scarcely closed until my

lover was kneeling at my feet, with my hand clasped in his, imploring pardon for the deceit he had practised—and his excuse was hopeless love. His natural taste for painting was fine, and it had been cultivated. He had brought with him all that was necessary to support the imposture—my father had no suspicions—and the artist remained in the house. I, ignorant as an infant of the world, listened, loved, and consented to a fugitive marriage; and on the fifth night we eloped, reached the Scottish border, and were married at the bridge of Coldstream.

“A few short weeks of happiness were followed by three long years of misery. Henry had only obtained leave between returns, when he madly eloped, violated military rules, and with difficulty was permitted to sell his commission. His guardian had robbed him, and the £1000. his commission had produced, was all on which we could place dependence. I wrote to my father—the letter was returned

with an unbroken seal. Again and again I appealed to him for pardon. Through the clergyman, at last my letters reached him, but he was obdurate; everything, clothes, trinkets, even my childhood's toys, were transmitted to me, and that with a minute precision too, which seemed to bespeak an anxiety that no *souvenir* should be left behind to remind him of his unfortunate daughter, or to recall to memory that hapless being whom he had once loved so well, but had now torn from his heart."

She paused, and wept bitterly. I had not listened unmoved; and Mr. Egan's glistening eye showed that his boasted insensibility was not proof against the softening influence of woman's tears.

"Arrah! bad luck attend him, the ould Turk!" ejaculated *Shawn Crughadore*, — "couldn't he make allowance for poor cratures that had neither sense nor discretion? Troth, the same lad, though he is your father,

will get an air of the fire in a warmer corner than ever his own kitchen afforded of a winter's day !”

The painter's wife continued—

“ Henry indulged in no expensive pleasures or pursuits, but he was careless in the management of his limited resources, and I knew no more of the use of money than a child. Gradually, our small dependence dwindled away, and, at last, not a shilling remained undrawn at the banker's. My husband kept the sad secret to himself, and by disposing, one after another, of every saleable article, the means of support were, for a time, obtained. The birth of a child added to our expenses—the abject poverty to which we were reduced could be concealed no longer—every trinket in my possession disappeared—my baby died—I was driven to despair, and my poor husband's state of mind was bordering upon madness. In this state of utter destitution, it occurred to us that our talents might be turned to advantage. In drawing,

Henry excelled — and I am really a good musician. Without friends or introduction I could obtain no pupils; and all that he could earn merely prevented us from perishing from starvation.”

The door flew open suddenly, and a young man rushed into the apartment, and caught the pale girl in his arms; and there was no difficulty in recognizing the portrait-painter in the wan and melancholy stranger. Want and sorrow marked his despairing countenance; and the threadbare remains of what had been once a fashionable costume, evidenced the poverty of the wearer.

“Are you better, dear, dear Caroline? Cheer up!—see—I have brought you *two pounds*. They were hardly earned. I did not tell you, love—but I had many a weary mile to walk; and a heavy heart makes a long road, they say.”

“Poor Henry!” she said, patting his pale cheek, “I am now quite well, thanks to these kind strangers.”

For the first time the painter looked round ; and, when his eye fell on the portly proportions of *Shawn Crughadore*, the hectic flush died on his cheek, and he muttered—

“ Ruined !—ruined ! It is the sheriff ! ”

“ Arrah ! *avourneeine* ! the devil a harm the said sheriff will do you,” returned Mr. Egan, drily.

“ No, no, Henry — so far from injury, he forced.....”

And she exhibited the one-pound note which *Shawn Crughadore*, as he supposed, had conveyed to her so cunningly.

“ Good God ! ” exclaimed the painter. “ I am grateful to you, sir. Alas ! I never thought at one time that the only daughter of Sir Philip Lewisham.....”

“ The daughter of who ? ” demanded Mr. Egan, hurriedly.

The painter repeated the name.

“ *Monasindiaoul* ! Isn't this quare ? ” continued the sheriff. “ This morning I found a *Times* newspaper in the post-office—devil's

luck to the lad that sent it to me! I opened it, and what do ye think I saw? There was a long paragraph about a fellow who was badly hanged; and to call my attention to it particularly, there was a pen and ink sketch of myself drawn on the margin, with a writ in one hand, and a halter in the other. Musha! bad luck to him that drew it!—every day he sees a paving-stone, and every day he doesn't! Do you know a Frederick Lewisham?"

"My cousin!" replied the painter's wife.
"What of him?"

"He's dead, that's all," replied Mr. Egan.

"Dead! Impossible."

"They have taken the liberty of burying him, at all events," continued the sheriff.
"At the end of the halter the scoundrel has stuck into my fist you'll see the account of the way he broke his neck."

With a trembling hand the painter took the paper.

"You'll see it with my flattering portrait,"

observed Mr. Egan, "at the bottom of the other page."

The painter's eyes remained fixed, however, as if under the power of fascination, on an advertisement which topped the newspaper.

"I cannot—dare not—credit the evidence even of my own senses. Pray, sir, read that notice," he said, with evident agitation.

I obeyed the wish expressed.

"If this should meet the eye of C. M. S., or that of the gentleman to whom she was married at Coldstream, on Tuesday, the 27th of October, 184—, they are earnestly requested to write to the father of the lady, and are hereby assured that the past is forgiven and forgotten.

"Any draft on Messrs. Moseley, Dixon, and Wright, Furnival's Inn, London, will be duly honoured."

A second time the wanderers were locked in each other's arms.

"Henry," murmured the pale girl, as she sobbed convulsively on the bosom of her husband, "the love which stood the stern test of poverty and sorrow as ours has done, will now render un hoped prosperity doubly sweet. Come, love! we will re-occupy our humble lodging for a few days longer."

"Arrah! the devil a foot you'll put in the same, but to remove your traps; and I suppose it won't require a horse and cart to carry off your goods and chattels," said Mr. Egan.

"What, sir? am I then to consider myself a prisoner?" inquired the painter.

"Why, that depends upon yourself," returned *Shawn Crughadore*. "You have two choices—my house, or the county gaol."

"Let me understand you, sir."

"I'll try and do so," replied Mr. Egan. "That sketch I got by post this morning is not a flattering one, and I have taken a sort of fancy to have my countenance transferred decently to canvass. I would rather be painted plain, with neither rope nor writ in

the picture ; but if I must have something in my fist, let it be something gentlemanly and Christian-like. I'll not object to a tumbler of punch or a pack of cards—but, for the love of God, leave out both hemp and parchment !”

Two months passed, and I read in the *Gazette* that Henry Arthur Staunton, formerly of the —th light dragoons, had obtained the royal assent “to assume the name and bear the arms of Lewisham.”

Another moon waned, and the *Times* announced the safe accouchement of “The lady of H. A. S. Lewisham, of Lewisham Abbey, of a son and heir.”

CHAPTER IV.

SKETCHES OF CHARACTER—A CA SA IN CONNAUGHT.

Bardolf. Sir, a word with you :—
I have three pound to free
Mouldy and Bull-calf.
Falstaff. Go to ; well.

SHAKSPEARE.

I had frequent opportunities of meeting my new acquaintance, the sub-sheriff, and the more I conversed with him, the more I was struck with the keenness of his observation, which enabled him to penetrate into men's characters with an accuracy that seemed almost inconceivable. I persuaded him to dine with me at the mess ; and next morning he sketched some of my companions, faith-

fully as if he had been seven years in the regiment himself.

“ Well, Mr. Egan,” I said, “ your intuitive acquaintance with human character is remarkable. Come, I must test your abilities still further. The gentleman who sat beside you, Captain Lloyd.....”

“ Is a prosy ass,” returned *Shawn Crughadore*. “ He told me a pointless story twice over within an hour. His budget is but lightly supplied, I fancy—and in one day’s acquaintance he would get shot of his stock in trade, and, as I suspect, it would prove but an indifferent assortment.”

“ *Rem acu*,” I exclaimed.

“ Speak English, if you please,” returned the sub-sheriff. “ My classical education was rather neglected in my youth. I don’t regret it, however, for, under God, I am inclined to think my ignorance has saved me from the gallows. I had all the inclination to be one of the greatest rogues in Connaught, but

want of ability obliged me to remain the honest man I am."

I smiled at the declaration.

"Honest!" I exclaimed, "always barring horse-flesh, and Easter offerings."

"Pish!" replied Mr. Egan; "when everything was topsy-turvy in the world, why should not I have a pull? and the priest's purse was only a perquisite of office. There was enough scraped afterwards together to bury him in style; and, for the honour of their own corps, the clergy passed him through purgatory *gratis*."

"Well, did you observe the gentleman who sat opposite?" I inquired.

"To be sure I did. An old bilious brevet-major, who bothered me with a long rigmarole story of scrambling through a mud ditch, and over a bamboo fence, into an enclosure which he called Fort Cornelius. You get that twice a week from old orange-peel, I suppose?"

"Another and decided hit," I answered. "One further question, and I have done; but this last you will find a puzzler. Did you observe a red-faced personage beside the brevet-major?"

"Yes."

"He is our paymaster—and, until well-advanced in life, he was a civilian. Can you guess what his former profession might be?"

"Easily," was the prompt reply.

"I doubt it, Mr. Egan."

"He was a pawnbroker."

"Right; but ridiculous. You have been told this fact; you never could have guessed it."

"No—upon the honour of the under representative of majesty! I might have set him down a butcher, or the landlord of a roadside inn, but for the peculiar expression of a sort of 'I'm-not-to-be-done,' which he was eternally throwing cautiously around him. Unconsciously, and when otherwise unoccupied, he

played with the forks, balanced them on the point of his fingers, and frequently examined the hall-marks on the spoons. But one circumstance at once told me what his former calling had been. You remember a raw youth who was pushing a snuff-box round the table, with an assurance that it had been in his family since a year or two before the deluge. 'Show it here,' growled old red face—out came his spectacles—and, instead of examining the lid, he looked only at the bottom. 'Humph! hundred years old! It's not twenty. Sixpence an ounce, additional duty, and there's the mark.' Phew! says I to myself, that lad knows the difference between a salt-spoon and a fish-slice. 'New or old,' returned the owner, in high dudgeon, 'I was offered twenty guineas for it.' The old fellow dandled it on the tips of his fingers for a second. 'They wouldn't give you four upon it,' he muttered. 'He's a pawnbroker,' says I."

"A most true conclusion," I returned.
"As you have favoured me with correct

sketches of my absent friends, would you oblige me with a slight pencilling of my own character?"

"With all my heart!" replied Mr. Egan. "You're no puppy, or you shouldn't have had the honour of my acquaintance. You aren't a bore; or I wouldn't have been bothered with you. You're well enough in your way, can troop a guard, ride decently to hounds, shoot snipes, sing a passable song, play billiards, and hold your own with men, but —" and *Shawn Crughadore* made a pause.

"Go on."

Mr. Egan "looked unutterable things."

"Well, my dear friend, like all this world besides, you're a fool after your own fashion. A pretty woman, and a little soft solder—and *Monasindiaoul!* You're done to a turn in ten minutes."

"Whence do you draw this inference of my sentimental weakness?" I inquired.

"Just from a little observation," replied

the sub-sheriff. "The morning of our interview with the painter's wife, or baronet's daughter, or whatever you call her, I remarked you closely. Every tear she shed, in went your hand into the pocket of your jacket — and at every sigh, you were groping for your purse. But there goes one of my body guard ; a gentleman who, before a twelvemonth, will ornament society at Botany Bay. I wonder what the rascal wants? Some job for me. Don't go for a minute. I will be back in a twinkling."

Whatever the business was that the gentleman predestined to settle in Australia had with his employer, it was speedily transacted. As Patsey Lynch made his communication, Mr. Egan occasionally elevated his shoulders, or responded by a monosyllable, or a movement of the head. At the conclusion of a brief audience, Patsey gathered the skirts of his *cota more* under his left arm, and started off at an easy trot, while Mr. Egan bestowed his benison on the mission, "*Reeigh !*" (run !)

"may the devil speed ye!" and immediately rejoined me.

"Your aide-de-camp is off in a hurry," I said.

"And though he has sixteen miles to travel, he'll keep the pace you see, unless with a minute's halt at the door of a poteenie-house for refreshment, which will be about as many times as there are miles in the journey."

"Is the business urgent?"

"Particularly," responded the sub-sheriff.

"Life and death, I suppose."

"Not exactly so momentous as that," replied *Shawn Crughadore*; "and the story is easily told. I have a friend and an annuitant, who, on a fair average, receives as many law processes yearly as would paper his drawing-room. His house is beautifully situated—not exactly as a painter would call it—for devil a thing the eye can rest upon for miles but brown heath and mud cabins."

"And in what consists the beauty of the situation?"

"Why, it's on the verge of three counties—into one you could pitch a potato, and from the drawing-room window, you could shoot a man with a pocket-pistol in the other."

"Still the beauty of the situation remains a mystery."

"Ah! then I must explain it," said the representative of majesty. "Down comes a writ—plaintiff in person hands it—of course, I'm ready—defendant desperate—just step home to load my pistols—(devil a pistol I would carry in my pocket for a five-pound note, for fear it would go off by accident)—Patsey, in the mean time, tucks his *cota more* under his arm, and away he goes—and by the time we arrive, the doors are locked, and cloot or horn is not on the bailiwick, but grazing quietly across the stream, and carefully herded, for fear they should come back to their native county until after our departure."

"And is this expedition—"

“Just what I have described.—A hungry attorney bought a bill of Big Malachi's—two hundred pounds—for which he gave twenty—heaped every expense he could upon it—motions of court—substituted service—and here, he's fresh with an execution. For fear I wouldn't do my duty—the Lord forgive him for the suspicion!—he's come down himself—and I'm at his service as soon as the innkeeper has got a collar stuffed, and a trace mended. Well, Patsey will be three hours before us, and I'll be greatly surprised if we find anything with four legs on the place, unless it be a straggling hound, or the cat at the gate-house.”

“I should like to see the attorney after—”

“He has found *nulla bona* returned to his writ,” exclaimed *Shawn Crughadore*, interrupting me; “I'll describe our reception to you as well as if you were present.”

I nodded to Mr. Egan.

“Well, off we go—in a chaise, of course—for public officers' lives are not to be

exposed to evening air on an outside jaunting-car. Well, we reach the scene of action after a pleasant drive, which I have agreeably diversified by pointing out a bog, where the week before a tithe-proctor was buried to the chin, and the process-server, with a rope about his neck, obliged to take his oath that he would quit the country for ever. At the last village we pass through, it is gratifying to see that the owners of every cabin are prepared for our reception—for out of every door, a blear-eyed *caillough*¹ pops her head, and there's a general chorus, English and Irish, as we drive down the street, 'May the devil break your necks, ye thieves, before you come back again!' The attorney hints that he has a strong conviction that the peasantry are lawless—to which I reply, by offering a prayer to Heaven that they may not have the most distant suspicion that he is in any way connected with the law. We reach the house, and find defendant sitting in a first-floor

¹ An old woman.

window playing the bagpipes, with a jug of punch at one elbow, and a double-barrelled gun at the other. Nothing with four feet to be seen—but a score of idle scoundrels with flails and pitchforks, giving a shuffling accompaniment with their hobnailed brogues to the ‘tow, row, row,’ that has been struck up by ‘the master’ to welcome us. The attorney modestly announces that he has some private business with Mr. O'Donnell, and that it would be better transacted within doors—but Mr. O'D. declines the honour of an interview. Plaintiff observes that a *ca sa* for three hundred is in his pocket; and in reply defendant makes particular inquiries after his mother. I threaten to break the door—every scoundrel in the yard flourishes his cudgel—defendant exchanges the pipes for the fowling-piece—and the attorney supplicates me in a whisper to save his life, and be off before we're murdered. Away we trundle—defendant plays ‘Nora Crina’ on our retreat, and the vagabonds in the yard

give a triumphant war-whoop. But here he comes," and he pointed to the bearer of the *ca sa*. "And so you are going on a three months' leave. Well, captain, take care of yourself."

And then, as he shook my hand, he whispered in my ear—

"Do you know your weak point? I'll tell it to you again—*woman!* a wet eye, and soft solder, and you're done for!"

I smiled, as *Shawn Crughadore* toddled off with his companion and the *ca sa*.

"I may be a little sentimental," I said to myself; "but neither smile nor tear with a sigh or two shall influence me as they once did. I am woman-proof at last, thank Heaven!"

CHAPTER V.

I FALL IN LOVE—THE THREE MARYS.

How shall I dote on her with more advice,
That thus, without advice, begin to love her ?
Two Gentlemen of Verona.

My destination was an English village on the seaside, frequented during the season by personages of fashion, comprising the beauty of Birmingham, and the aristocracy of the Potteries. Blest with an undutiful uncle, eccentric in his movements as a planet, and absolute as the grand seignior—he being pleased to become gouty at the Yellow Lion, advised me by letter of the same, intimating that the leave of absence I had expected might be agreeably consumed at the Lion

aforesaid, in watching the progress of his convalescence, and, between fits, listening to interesting details of the action on the Brandywine, and the surrender at Saratoga. God knows, at times, I secretly wished that the Americans had retained him a state prisoner for life; but, as Sir Cæsar O'Sullivan was graciously pleased to allow me a hundred per annum, paid quarterly, in Craig's Court, I listened periodically, and with Christian composure, to the causes which led to the skirmish at Lexington, and bore with decent composure the trial and execution of the unfortunate Major André. For similar reasons, and as in duty bound, I obeyed the mandate of "mine uncle,"—and on a blowing summer evening debarked upon the wooden jetty from "the Maid of Cashmere," as a little, antiquated, grumbling steamer was designated, in which I had been incarcerated for six hours, with the pleasing alternative of being drenched with spray if I kept the deck, or poisoned below by a villanous miasma, which seemed to

combine, in nice proportion, the aromatic elegancies of a chandler's-shop, with the *fumet* of a gin-palace.

I found Sir Cæsar ensconced in the front sitting-room of the Yellow Lion; one foot, swathed in flannel, rested on a hassock, and three favourite terriers occupied the hearth-rug. From all I received a hearty welcome; the veteran squeezed my hand, and the terriers jumped, barked, and exhibited the liveliest pleasure at the return of an old acquaintance. At last, the general quiet was restored; the dogs dropped asleep, I dipped heavily into a decanter of port, and Sir Cæsar, after a short review of "Scudamore on Gout," gratified me with an elaborate account of his passage of the Scuyllkill. How far his American reminiscences might have extended, it would be doubtful to determine; but gout is unfavourable to long stories; and when we were attempting the relief of New York—an operation I always dreaded—a twinge, sudden and severe, interrupted the effort we were

about to make to throw in ammunition and provisions, and Sir Cæsar was obliged to retire to bed, leaving that important city and its garrison scarce of shot and shells, and indeed without a second biscuit.

I strolled out, and while New York was abandoned to its fate, returned thanks for my own deliverance. I reached the beach; the wind had fallen, and the light swell which rolled in upon the sands harmonized with the glowing tinge upon the horizon, where westward the sun, "with disk, like battle-target red," was about to veil his splendour in the ocean. I wandered on; the breaking of the tiny waves upon the beach inducing a dreamy listlessness of thought, that recalled the memory of days gone by. I thought of Emily Spencer—and the first passion of early manhood once more returned, and Emily was again beloved. Ay, often on such an evening had we wandered arm-in-arm, listened to the monotonous splashing of the surf, and watched the golden tints that streaked the distant sky,

announcing the sun's departure. And then came the dissipation of love's visions—the post-bag brought in at breakfast—my father seizing on the Mark Lane price-current—and my uncle Cæsar, after polishing the glasses of his spectacles, unclosing a War-office epistle with an official seal large as a cheese-plate, and the address surmounted with an O. H. M. S.

“Humph! Fortunate family! I landed only two days before the brush at Lexington, and you'll be on the Agueda before the army breaks up. Harry, my dear boy, get your traps together; you must start by the night-mail, or you'll miss the Lisbon packet.”

And while my poor mother turned deadly pale, and my father looked bothered at the intelligence, Sir Cæsar strode up and down the room, dispensing crumbs of consolation.

“What good luck! Not a flint snapped before you join—and wigs on the green within a fortnight! Don't take more traps with you than can be stowed in your bullock-

trunks. Plenty of deceased property to be had by auction at the drum-head; and, if you're knocked off the hooks, a light kit is easily disposed of, and saves trouble to the major."

Suddenly the *tableau* at my father's breakfast-table was dissolved. A pretty spaniel ran past me, yelping in idle pursuit of a sand-lark, and a voice, almost at my elbow, exclaimed in the sweetest tones imaginable—

"Pompey! you naughty dog! come back!"

I started, turned, and was electrified. As sweet a girl as ever paced a sea-beach by "the pale moonlight" was beside me; and one look assured me that she was beautiful, and I undone. To recover the truant favourite—receive her thanks—and, as she pressed the little fugitive to her bosom, ejaculate a prayer that, if souls transmigrated, as the old philosophers assert, mine should be incorporated in the carcase of the favoured Pompey—all this was transacted in a minute. She bade me a good evening; and oh! the

sweetness of the parting smile, as that murderous valediction issued from coral lips which might have put a cherub's to the blush. Parting smile! 'sdeath!—impossible. To part with her would be to part with life; and I was indisposed to become a suicide.

“Might I not see her home? merely for the protection of Pompey—he might again play truant—dog-stealing was awfully on the increase—thirteen advertisements in the *Times* to-day—and several suspicious characters on board the steamer—canine felony imprinted on their very foreheads—villains capable of any enormity, from the cutting a poodle's throat to the abstraction of a tinker's colley.”

She blushed and thanked me; but she was close to home; and pointing to a turret with a flagstaff on its roof, told me that behind it was her domicile. In a few minutes we reached the building; she produced a key, unlocked the portal, wished me again good evening, and, with a graceful courtesy, closed

the door, and vanished, leaving me on the right side to run away, and more in love than ever Mark Antony was.

I reconnoitred the premises. The tower was evidently a summer-house, built to command a more extensive sea-view than the low windows of the cottage could embrace. I contrived to peep over the wall—and within, a well-kept flower-garden bespoke gentility and good taste in the occupants. The place and the fair inhabitant were therefore in correct keeping with each other; and as I turned my reluctant steps towards the Yellow Lion, I came to the conclusion that my evening adventure was actually a celestial vision, the young lady being a houri of the prophet, and her abiding-place the garden of the blest!

Morning came—I won't inflict my dreams upon the reader—and breakfast followed, terminating with a skirmish between my uncle's company and a party of Kentucky backwoodsmen. From the bay-window of the inn, the embattled roof of the tower was

visible ; and need I say, that on it my eyes were strained, and that there every thought was centred ?

“ Well, Harry,” continued Sir Cæsar, “ I moved along a corduroy road with open files, until we came in front of weedy morass—never keep close order in a wood, you know—when suddenly the Indian guide, pointing to the canes, and putting his finger to his nose, exclaimed, ‘ Him there !’ I desired the company to extend right and left, and each man cover himself with a tree, while, with the centre files, I should feel my way through the reeds. I had hardly given the order, when crack went a rifle, and the bullet peeled a pine-stump immediately behind me. Says Serjeant Kelly—”

“ By heavens ! there she is standing on the tower. My dear uncle, move cautiously through the canes, and I’ll be back before you deforce the Kentucky men.”

I seized my hat—rushed from the room—and while Sir Cæsar registered an oath in

heaven affirming my insanity, I was hurrying to the beach, to feast my eyes upon the angel form of the proprietrix of Pompey.

The street shut out the tower, and when I cleared it, the lady of my love had disappeared. Well, she might soon take look-out duty again, and I would observe the fortress from a distance. Three hours passed, while, like the sentry of an outlying picket, I kept my eye upon the fortress—now dipped beneath the shelter of a sand-ridge, and again closing nearer to the place under cover of a bathing-box. Not a petticoat appeared upon the leads—and I returned to the Yellow Lion, sadder but not wiser than when I left it.

“As I told you, Harry,” resumed mine uncle, pushing a bottle of port across the table, which he was drinking in honour of his convalescence, and directly in contradiction to medical admonition, “Serjeant Kelly remarked that he had seen a sparkle like a musket’s in a thicket on my left. ‘Oh, ho,’ says I, ‘they want to get us between the

brushwood and the canes—but we'll outflank Master Jonathan. Take ten files, and get well in the rear of—'

"The lady on the tower!" I exclaimed, springing up, and once more rushing towards the beach.

Alas! this effort to view the sylph of the sands in "garish daylight," was bootless as the former, and infinitely more tantalizing. As I regained sight of the tower, a female form moved over the platform, and slowly disappeared—in a minute melting into air, or rather leisurely descending the staircase. Another glance as the loved form crossed the turret-window—and I was "left lamenting."

All this was torturous. To enhance my misery, I had a distant glance at a heaven, from which, like an excluded Peri, I had been interdicted. The agony of disappointment was deplorable; and a pack of unsentimental savages had invaded the sand-hills, and added to my despair. A sour-looking spider-brusher on my left was warning a

ricketty three-year-old against a tumble; while a nursery-governess on the right, late for an appointment with a nice young man, who, now and again, made himself visible on a distant sand-hill, whipped her interesting charge to increase his velocity of motion. Endeavouring to escape these nuisances, I retreated upon a nondescript building, that I should have supposed had been intended for a pigeon-house, but which the owner designated a pagoda. Within, sundry young ladies were seated—one, engaged working a scripture scene in Berlin wool; another, reading "Delicate Distress;" and a third, crying at the catastrophe.

"Letty!" exclaimed the fair reader, letting the book fall upon the floor as I passed the window, "that's the young man that keeps the hatter's shop in Bold Street. Lord! I wonder if he's married!"

Was there ever such a persecuted wretch? First to be crossed in love, and afterwards mistaken for a hatter! I returned to the

Yellow Lion, suffering under the double infliction of wounded pride and a broken heart ; and, determining to glean some knowledge of my sweet incognita, summoned mine host to a private interview in the back bar.

From Boniface I learned the secret history of the families, but nothing that could throw light upon my love. Like the houses of Montagu and Capulet, the tower and the pagoda were at feud, the lord of the former being an iron-master from Wolverhampton—the owner of the latter a bridle-cutter from Bradburn. Both were warm men in the parlance of the money-market ; and, if men are wealthy, why should they not show that they are so ? The iron-master had a fair daughter, and the man of leather was equally blessed. The young ladies doted upon the sea — their mammas declared bathing would be the life of them—and in due time, and by a sort of mutual impulse, the sires of both decided on the erection of a marine villa, and, by an unhappy accident, selected adjacent plots

for the site. Hence an unfortunate rivalry arose. If the man of leather added a sleeping-room to his villa, the man of iron increased his by the addition of a wing. As a *coup de grace* to his ambitious neighbour, he of Bradburn devised and executed the building above described. But his triumph was short. Up rose the tower with a rapidity that might have led people to suppose that the man of iron had borrowed the lamp of Aladdin for the occasion. To be looked down upon by the Smiths was intolerable to the Browns—and the bridle-cutter threatened to stick another story on the pagoda. But the intention had scarcely transpired, when an architect was observed determining what height of superstructure might be placed upon the turret; and it was ascertained, beyond a doubt, that Mr. Smith had sworn by the prophet, that if Mr. Brown reached the altitude of the temple of Hong Chi—why he, Smith, would not stop one brick under Babel!

Fortunately, a mutual friend pointed out that if both parties were determined to reach the moon, neither leather, nor even iron could stand it; and it was arranged that the turret and pagoda should remain—*in statu quo ante bellum*.

Now, all this was *caviare* to me; and not one scintilla of intelligence could I glean, but that my charmer, Miss Smith, was called Mary, and sang divinely, while Miss Brown's name was Susan, and her accomplishments were incalculable.

And what was I the better of all this intelligence, and how was I to win my way to the presence of my mistress? Should I summon the tower in form, or carry it by escalade?—or, throwing myself upon the mercy of the Smiths, supplicate an interview? Alas! in this I should have little chance of succeeding; “Parents have flinty hearts”—and an iron-master's must be adamant.

Evening drew on—twilight fell—once more I decided on a *reconnaissance*; and, although

Sir Cæsar was labouring hard to bring his skirmish with the Kentucky men to a close, I left him stuck fast in the cane-brake, and hurried to the tower, dearer far to me than was that of Sestos to Leander—a young gentleman of amorous memory, who used to swim the Hellespont for the chances of a kiss.

I approached the building cautiously. I looked up, and, in the haze of evening, a female form flitted past the window.

“Blessed Mary! can it be?” It must be—it could be no other than my mistress. I uttered a sentimental sigh—one so profoundly melancholy, that if overheard even by an intelligent dog, the animal would have known at once that my heart was breaking by inches. The figure remained stationary at the casement. I sang in a low voice, but with a pathos that would soften rocks,

Tell me, Mary, how to woo thee!

At the conclusion of my song, the casement

was partially unclosed, and a hand waved gently its mute farewell.

"Stay," I exclaimed, "loveliest! and listen for a moment to him who adores you—promise that I shall see that angel form again, and with one motion of your lily hand, give love's signal that I may enjoy this exquisite happiness to-morrow evening."

"Mary!" exclaimed a voice from within.

A flourish of the hand was given—my prayer was heard and acceded to—the casement closed—a foot descended the staircase—and I returned to my inn to dream of love and Mary.

Oh! how interminable appeared the morrow! but evening came at last, and twilight found me pacing the front of the tower. I had penned a *billet* for my *inamorata*—ardent and impassioned—containing assurances of endless love, legally guaranteed by a lover's faith, and a soldier's honour. An hour passed—I heard a step in the basement of the tower

—the door was slightly opened—I saw a form indistinctly.

“ Mary !” cried a voice.

I seized the hand of the retreating virgin, pressed it rapturously to my lips, and introduced my letter, with an humble entreaty, that if my life were worth a pin's fee, she would mercifully give me an answer in the morning. The arm was withdrawn, and the door closed.

“ Mary ! what the devil keeps you ?”

She fled inside—I retreated to mine inn—found the governor in bed—ordered a devilled bone—drank accordingly, and sought my pillow—the redolence of Mary's hand fresh upon my lips, notwithstanding a cheroot, with two glasses of cold water and *eau de vie*, had partially interfered with the attar of the rose.

Next morning the duties of the toilet were elaborately performed. We breakfasted—and before my honoured uncle had accomplished two miles of a night march on the banks of the Potomac, I was off to receive

the promised answer to my declaration of eternal love.

On approaching the tower, an enormous ensign—a red cross on a white field—floated from a flagstaff, to which it was sadly disproportioned; indeed, at first sight, I fancied it was a table-cloth spread out upon a fishing-rod. On the pagoda also, a union-jack was hoisted—and from these lively demonstrations I anticipated that some joyous event had occurred, or some honoured anniversary had returned. Probably, five-and-twenty years before Mrs. Smith had surrendered her virgin hand at the altar of Hymen—or Mrs. Brown had presented the bride-cutter with a first pledge of connubial love. But from these conjectures I was speedily diverted. A female form appeared, peeped through the curtains, kissed her hand again and again, and vanished. It was Mary—my angel Mary—my declaration was approved—my passion reciprocated—and who knew but that a year hence, the table-cloth would dangle from the pole to

notify to the world that I was a happy papa, and Mrs. O'Sullivan as well as could be expected! There was rapture in the thought. I began to dream—the stout nurse showed me a smiling cherub—the doctor observed that “Mrs. O'S. was doing nicely”—and I congratulated the ironmaster on being made a grandpapa, while his metallic features softened to a smile. But this reverie was broken. A smart servant-maid advanced, looked round suspiciously, dipped under a sand-bank, and then inquired, “Are you the gent. what keeps the hatter's shop in Bold Street?”

“Am I the devil?” was the reply.

“The Lord forbid!” ejaculated the spider-brusher; “but our cook had it from Mrs. Brown's housemaid. Well, here's a letter for you. I am afraid of being seen; but I'll return in five minutes for an answer.”

I snatched my Mary's billet—no doubt the first confession of young love, conveyed with all the delicate alarm of maiden modesty.

I looked at the little packet—the border was not embossed, the paper unperfumed, no seal in coloured wax, exhibiting Cupid astride upon a lion, or any of the cunning devices which young ladies commonly employ to insinuate an eternity of affection. The handwriting was that of a washerwoman, and it smelt like a fishmonger's account. What the devil could it mean? Ah! we were watched, discovered—and that man of iron, her father, had placed my Mary in durance vile, and, through some humble agency, obliged her to communicate to me her sufferings and her love.

I broke the wafer.

“DERE SIR,

“I resaved your lovin leter safe, and i would make an excuze out to meet ye this evenin, but our yong lady las night ocasioned such confuzion that the house is upside down. I'll have a Holadey next Tuesday, and will meet ye at the Peer. For the love of God,

take no advantage of my innicins, your a gentleman, I'm told, and behave as sich.

“Your's to command,

“MARY DAVIS.

“N.B.—I inclos a two years Caractur, and ye'll see from that, that I'm no runagade.

“M. D.”

“This is to certify that Mary Davis, plain cook—sober—obliging—now discharged—wages paid in full.”

Saints and devils! What was all this about? I looked towards the tower—the table-cloth was flaunting from the barber's pole—and what was the confusion Miss Mary had kicked up?

“Any message for the cook?” said the bearer of the epistle, popping up at my elbow.

“The cook!—do I look like a cook?”

“No, sir, they say ye're in the hatting line—”

"Danin hats and hatters! Attend to me, or I'll run mad."

"Don't, for the sake of Heaven; or let us first get out of the sandbanks."

"Attend to me. What confusion did Miss Mary cause—what turned the house upside down?"

"Lord, sir, it was all so unexpected; but she had a beautiful time, and the prettiest baby ever eyes was laid on."

"Stuff—nonsense—madness! My Mary have a beautiful time, and a pretty baby!—she, whose ethereal figure and matchless symmetry bore no assimilation to anything maternal?—she, than whom

"Grecian chisel ne'er did trace,
A nymph, a naiad, or a grace,
With lovelier form, or——"

"Lord, sir, I suppose you never saw young missus without a shawl—why she was round as a beer-barrel."

"You'll drive me desperate—what the devil Mary do you mean?"

"Miss Mary Smith as was, that married Mr. Nicholas Heavyside."

"Nicholas Heavyside!" I ejaculated. "But the thing's absurd, impossible—she whose waist an agate ring would span, round as a beer-barrel!—she had no shawl—nothing but a dog, called Pompey—"

"Lawks a mercy! ye mean the missus' cousin—why she went to school last Tuesday."

"Well, before I go distracted, let me endeavour to understand ye. There's one Miss Mary Smith that was that married Mr. Nicholas Heavyside?"

"Yes, sir?"

"And another Miss Mary—"

"Who has a black and white spaniel given to her by her sweetheart, Mr. Robinson, to whom she's to be married after Christmas."

"And what means these cursed pothooks and tongs, with a two years' character?"

"That's from Mary cook—as good a fellow-servant as ever I would wish to live with—"

and a pretty girl, too, before she had the smallpox."

"Oh, confound the whole of you!" I exclaimed, crumpling Miss Davis's billet and flinging it with her two years' character in the face of the messenger. "Tell Mary Heavy-side to go to Bath, and Mary Robinson may bear her company, and as to the cook—"

"That's what I want to know—for she bade me to be sure and bring back an answer."

"She may return to the place from which all the sisterhood are sent," I exclaimed, rushing from the fatal scene, and with a blighted heart hastening to rejoin my uncle.

"I am as tired of this cursed place," observed Sir Cæsar, as he pushed the decanter across the table, "as I was formerly of Gibraltar. I remember, Harry, when I lay in—"

"Don't talk of lying-in, for the love of Heaven," I returned; "a lying-in has nearly driven me distracted. If you would save my life, let us be off at cock-crow. I'll fly with

you to the backwoods—listen to the scalping story, until you're tired of it—and cross the Potomac on the raft. All I stipulate is, that we never enter a house until we ascertain that it is unafflicted with anything answering to the name of Mary."

"Why, what the devil's in the wind, Harry? It was only last night when you were in raptures with sea-bathing and the sands."

"True, Sir Cæsar, but see what misery I have since endured. I have been taken for a hatter—my mistress has unexpectedly lain-in—and instead of a *billet* on scented paper, written with a crow-quill, I have been annihilated with three inches of filthy foolscap, which stank like a butcher's bill, and informed me that 'Mary Davis was a good plain cook, and her wages had been paid.'"

We bundled off next morning, and when we topped a hill, and caught a last glance of the tower and the pagoda, I registered a vow that on the names of Smith and Brown, *ad urnam*, I would bestow my detestation.

CHAPTER VI.

VISIT TO LEAMINGTON — IN LOVE AGAIN.

Tro. O Cressid! O false Cressid! false, false, false!
Let all untruths stand by thy stained name,
And they'll seem glorious.

SHAKSPEARE.

A month wore away, and the peregrinations of Sir Cæsar and myself were marked with nothing beyond the ordinary adventures incident to tourists, who are not in that serene state of mental temperament, which bears with undisturbed composure the inconveniences of cross roads, and the impositions of country innkeepers. Frequent intimations through the ankle and great toe were given to the commander that, judging from

the activity of his skirmishers, the enemy had only retired to concentrate for a fresh attack—and whether we were operating in a flat-bottomed boat upon the Hudson, or making a forced march over a corduroy road, a twinge of gout at times annihilated our ablest combinations. Often after driving his pickets in, the enemy has evaded surprise, and escaped covered by an anthritic visitation—and more than one fort owed its deliverance to the same agency, after we had actually cut down the stockades.

For my own part, I had risen marvellously in my uncle's estimation; and I, who had so frequently deserted him when under fire, or left him stuck fast in a cane-brake, now listened to his longest story with Christian fortitude; and, as he was pleased to observe, had not only become a most agreeable companion, but also was daily obtaining a store of professional information, which, if it pleased the Lord to send me into the backwoods to try conclusions in a gentlemanly manner with

bowie-knife and tomahawk, might hereafter prove invaluable as a jewel above price. Heaven help Sir Cæsar!—all the while his seed was falling on the wayside—and the story he told to-night would be as novel to me to-morrow evening, as if I never heard it before.

The truth was that my heart was withered by recent disappointments ; and I who had so ardently indulged in the present possession of an agreeable consort, and three or four prospective cherubs the image of their mamma, had seen my dream of felicity dispelled ; and oh ! how rudely ! I had wooed an angel bride, and won a cook who had the small-pox. The lip that none had pressed, the eye that never smiled upon another, the cheek that

Blush'd at man's approval,

in fancy these were mine—when, in reality I had achieved a culinary conquest, and, instead of balmy kiss and “wreathed smile,” my passion would be rewarded by a hash or a

haricot, fabricated by a blowsy monster who had mistaken me for a young hatter from Bold Street, and spelled pier with a double *e*! The very thought was maddening.

At last our wanderings terminated, and my gracious uncle again took possession of his mansion in North Wales. To the name of Mary my antipathy was rooted; and as their number was legion, not a hostelry we had stopped at but turned out two or three of that abhorred designation. At the last post-house we intended to have slept at, I experienced a return of my natural infirmity, and felt an incipient weakness, as if, in course of time, I might have been induced to extend pardon to the sex. This imbecility of purpose on my part, I fancy, was induced by the delicate attentions and particularly white teeth of "the maid of the inn." I looked at her as she brought me hot water.

"Pretty one," I said, "where do you buy your dentifrice?"

"My what?" returned the soubrette.

"Why, my dear, you are positively handsome."

"Lord! how you gentlemen are given to tell fibs!"

"What's your name? Phœbe, Julia, Matilda?"

A shake of the head, and a furtive glance at the looking-glass.

"Ellen, Caroline, Nanette?"

"No, no; nothing but plain Mary."

"Then, plain Mary, you may be off. Leave the water, and go to the devil!"

"Lord!" exclaimed an assistant spider-brusher, who had been listening on the lobby, "the man's mad. Poor fellow! Crossed in love, I suppose; and that wicked-looking old villain in the parlour is the keeper," and away they bundled.

"I think we may as well stop here for the night," observed mine uncle, as I re-entered the great chamber, where he and the terriers had ensconced themselves.

"By no means," I returned; "what do you suppose they take you for?"

"Not a hatter, as I hope," replied Sir Cæsar, who occasionally indulged in a dry hit.

"No; with the external concerns of the human skull you are held innocent. It is with its internal management that you are considered to be skilful."

"Why, what the devil *do* they take me for?" exclaimed the commander.

"A keeper to a lunatic asylum."

"Order the horses, Harry, and horsewhip the landlord while you are doing it, or I'll have a slap at him with my crutch. Keeper to an asylum!—I that commanded the——thirteen years, and only gave up the regiment when gazetted a major-general! By Heaven! if you don't break five pounds worth of glass, I'll disinherit you!"

Without however smashing the prescribed quantity of crystal—as the Scotch call it—

we beat a retreat, but it was not among the most fortunate of the commander's movements. Turning a corner of the building, a trace slipped off, and while it was being replaced we found ourselves under the windows of the dormitory department of the hotel, and these occupied in force by Mary and her confederate.

"Poor soul! How quietly he takes it!" observed the younger soubrette. "He little knows what he has to undergo. Lord! Mary, did you ever see such a frightful old villain? How I pity the poor madman! — he'll be chained, put in a strait waistcoat, and flogged ten times a day to bring him to his senses."

"Go on, you scoundrel!" roared Sir Cæsar; and away we went.

The time came when I was obliged to bid my uncle farewell, and he parted with sincere regret with one who had become an excellent listener. As he squeezed my hand, he slyly inserted therein a cheque for fifty pounds;

and, as I had a month to spare, I determined to spend time and money at a fashionable watering-place, and after a little consideration decided on giving Leamington the honour of my company. I directed my movements accordingly; and on the second evening found myself seated at the dinner-table of a best class boarding-house, with two-and-twenty personages around it, some in search of health, and some in search of husbands. Among the lady-visitors, the latter pursuit predominated.

At one of these human beehives you meet everybody and encounter everything—skeletons from India encased in parchment, with a fractional portion of a liver left, who vainly expect a restoration of the remainder from the agency of spa-water;—and ladies from the country, in ultra-health, who supplicate the gods that they may be permitted to leave their superabundance of blowse and blood behind.

Of the inmates who had sought this modern

Bethsaida, had I been "i' the vein" for female admiration, one fair visiter would have commanded it. By the household arrangements, a lady who had been resident a week was my *vis-à-vis* at table. She was attractive, for the character of her face was that of unpretending prettiness; and she was interesting, for she was a widow. A day or two, and I was repulsive; but, on the third, a milder mood came on, and I, who had come to Leamington, frigid as Saint Senanus, was dying to cultivate a closer intimacy with the bereaved one, and establish a communion between two broken hearts.

I inquired her history—and the information I received was scanty. She was the relict of a Colonel Melville—had been widowed three years—was amply dowered—and although the said colonel had been old enough to be her grandfather, she retained her mourning-dress, as a token of the deep respect in which she held his pious memory.

One thing struck me as remarkable. She

seemed to receive but little attention from the gentlemen, and apparently, had no particular intimacy with any of her own sex. The causes were easily discovered. Many a grasping adventurer had marked her for a prey, and doubtless, she had been persecuted by puppies, whose

Cupids took their stand
Upon a widow's jointured land,

and whose advances required on her part a dignified *hauteur* to repel. That she was not a member of the female *coterie* was not marvellous—her personal advantages were strikingly superior—and everybody knows that women are confoundedly envious.

I, like the pretty widow, held aloof from the remainder of the body politic—and with the Indian portion of the company I had no sympathy whatever. What was the twaddle of Bombay, or the state of their biliary organs to me? What was it to me whether fellows, yellow as a kite's claw, enjoyed their tiffin, or had too little nutmeg in their san-

garee? I had also some reason to suspect that a young gentlewoman with auburn ringlets, vulgarly reputed red, entertained designs against my liberty; and all these causes induced me to discountenance familiar intercourse with the company, and instead of the reunion after dinner in the drawing-room, I usually took an evening ride or a stroll upon the common.

By a gratifying coincidence in taste, the pretty widow appeared to prefer a solitary walk in sober twilight, to small games and a romping *gallope*. On the fourth evening I overtook her, alighted from my horse, sent him home by a shepherd, offered my escort, and was accepted. The *tête-à-tête* seemed mutually agreeable—it was nearly supper hour when we returned—and when we joined the company, I thought the ladies exchanged expressive looks, and the gentlemen suppressed a smile. But what could be expected from the *canaille* of a boarding-house! fellows with scirrhus livers, and, of course,

at enmity with the human race, and the progeny of dealers in drysalteries and filthy dowlas, after years of "hope deferred," now desperate of matrimony! We both, I apprehend, discovered these impertinences, and treated them with that dignified indifference which persons evince to those whose accidental acquaintance may be tolerated under circumstances, and abandoned *à discretion*.

The effect produced upon the fair widow and myself by the ill-breeding of the remainder of the inmates of Mrs. Screwup was precisely what might have been expected. My attentions to the amiable relict of Colonel Melville were redoubled; and to mark her contempt of the inferior order of her own sex who had presumed to evince any insolent reserve to her or to me, she became daily more graciously condescending. She accepted my wine at dinner, allowed me to take her a short drive, spoke freely of her affairs, and lamented that it had pleased Heaven to leave

her at six-and twenty with thirty thousand pounds in the three per cents., and the additional incumbrance of an annuity of six hundred pounds per annum. Indeed, at first sight, I could scarcely perceive the misery of a woman being left so very independent—but, on duly considering the persecutions of fortune-hunters, as she painfully detailed them, I began to estimate the extent of her sufferings, and to sympathize accordingly. From the hot springs in the Pyrenees she had been hunted into Boulogne by an Irish major of dragoons. Well, that worthy gentleman having a disinclination to cross the Channel, the “love chase” was taken up by a gentleman of “the corner,” who disappeared after a week or two—a common-place event—with “the Derby.” She had sustained a sharp attack from a rear-admiral with a wooden leg; and half the cockney puppies in the room, who, to judge from the quantity exhibited on their persons, held agencies for the sale of mosaic gold; all had in turn said

nothing, but looked "unutterable things." Poor soul! I pitied her. Unworthy as these adventurers were, it still, no doubt, inflicted pain upon one so sensitive, when obliged to crush their presumptuous aspirations.

In all amatory confessions there are episodes, and one occurred that I cannot pass over in silence. It is better to premise that at this period of the affair, to use the *parlance* of my absent friend, *Shawn Crughadore*, I was "done to a turn;" I had found the only woman at last whom I could, should, or would love—I laughed at former delusions—and towers and pagodas—with Mary Cook, and Mary Robinson, and Mary Heavyside, only produced ludicrous recollections. Self-esteem—*vulgo*, conceit—whispered that I had established myself in the widow's estimation, while prudence insinuated, "What the devil presumption it must be on your part, Mr. O'Sullivan, to imagine that, with a captain's pay, and a paltry hundred a-year, you dare aspire to thirty thousand in the funds, an

annuity of six hundred, and a face and figure which had disturbed the general tranquillity of a boarding-house, by filling the women with envy, hatred, and malice, and driving the men the next step to despair!"

The occurrence I hinted at above was simply this:—We had strolled into the country—the walk exceeded the usual extent—and in a retired lane we sat down on the trunk of a fallen oak, and rested and sentimentalised at the same time. To trust himself in rural alleys, among hawthorns and honeysuckles, with an interesting widow, would require a man to have a harder casing over his pericardium than the breast-piece of a cuirassier, and in a few minutes I felt that I had taken up a dangerous position. I stole a side glance at my lovely companion—the lily predominated over the rose, and I fancied her indisposed. To my tender inquiries of “whether she were ill?” she replied that “she felt a little tired,” and dipped into her beaded bag for the usual restorative.

While seeking for the smelling-bottle, I aided her researches by removing the handkerchief, and on its border observed the name of "Julia," inscribed in fairy characters. Merely for support, I had delicately encompassed her slender waist—her hand remained in mine, and with an impulse not to be overcome, I whispered,

"Dear Julia!"

She started, looked for a moment in surprise, but not in anger. Was it possible?

'Twas the first time I dared so much,
And yet she chid not.

My brain fired—my heart throbbed wildly—the offence was recommitted—and "Dear Julia!" again pronounced, with more emphasis on the adjective—the waist was clasped more tenderly—the pressure of the hand was warmer—and—saints and angels! will it be credited? my lips touched hers, and no lightning glance of outraged propriety withered me on the spot!

"Dear—*dearest* Julia!"

“ Ah! Captain O'Sullivan, why should I be *dear to you?*” murmured a voice that thrilled through my very soul.

What I should have responded, I cannot pretend to guess. It was a moment of delicious rapture, for in that pithy but pathetic appeal the secret feelings of the angelic widow were betrayed—“ and no mistake.”

At this moment a slight noise startled us, and both, “ like guilty things,” looked up. The intruder was a woman, so pale, interesting, and careworn, that her melancholy cast of countenance told her unhappy history before she had apologised for the intrusion.

It was the old story, after all—“ villainous man,” as usual, at the bottom of it. A young officer and aged parents—boarding-school—servant bribed—garden—moonlight—consequences no longer concealable—tender intimation of this interesting fact, answered by copy of a letter from the Horse-Guards, ordering the offender to India. The frail one suffers all the horrors of desertion, and the

young scamp slips off the hooks by Asiatic cholera. General wind up—still-born babe, and temporary insanity.

While this afflicting narrative was being detailed, the amiable relict of the defunct Colonel expressed the deepest sympathy for the betrayed one—and, ere the tale of sin and sorrow terminated, the beaded bag was once more put in requisition.

I saw her cheeks colour, and overheard a whispered interjection—next moment she rose—desired the fair victim of that scampish cornet to remain, and asked me to accompany her.

“Had she lost anything?”

“Oh, no—a trifle—she remembered—”

And so did I, that she had given sixpence to an organ-grinder—possibly she had dropped her purse—contents a *bagatelle*—a small note and a few sovereigns. On we went—she unruffled and agreeable—trifles mark character—the widow's was decidedly matrimonial—no “how very provoking!” or “wonder I

could be so stupid"—she cared nothing for the dross—her sympathies were with the sufferer—she pitied while she blamed—and even to the wicked cornet, she extended a charitable hope that, in his dying hour, spasmodic cholera had not been embittered by conscientious qualms. Never was woman fabricated from mortal elements better adapted to ensure a man's felicity—every matrimonial element was combined—the figure faultless—the face one upon which, even in the second week of the honeymoon, a man might look with pleasure, while,

Blest with temper, whose unchanging ray
Would make the morrow cheerful as the day,

a man would glide hand in hand through this vale of tears, with the impersonation of an angel at his elbow, and in her sweet society forestall the joys of Paradise.

We sought the missing treasure, and I was fortunate enough to find the case, but not the jewel. An empty purse was lying beside the spot—and the felonious organ-grinder was no

doubt a wide-awake offender—he had purloined the property of the gentle Julia, and then abandoned the pretty trifle which contained it, lest the possession of the purse might have criminated him hereafter.

“How provoking!” ejaculated the Colonel’s widow. “Well, to-morrow that poor girl shall be relieved.”

I comprehended the affair in a second, and, quick as a harlequinade exchange, substituted my silken network for the widow’s. But she was obdurate—my full purse she would not accept—her empty one I would not relinquish—and in such relative positions we reached the place, where the deluded one was standing plucking berries from the hedge.

“Come to me,” said the compassionate widow, “on Friday morning—”

And she was punctilious in adding the hour and address.

“I shall give you some little assistance; and my maid, in the meanwhile, will look out some serviceable clothing.”

"Alas, dear lady!" said the victim of the wicked light dragoon, "I know not at this moment where I am to obtain a shelter, or rest this aching head to-night."

I marked the effect on Julia—that accursed organ-grinder had more than compensated for the abstraction of her purse, by giving me an advantage of which I now availed myself. I forced three bank-notes and a dozen sovereigns into her unwilling hand, retaining, however, in place of a foot's length of ordinary network, the embroidered *bijou* of the Colonel's relict.

This was transacted in a minute. Mrs. Melville called the forsaken one aside, placed a bank-note in her hand, and assured her of future protection. I never heard gratitude more ardently expressed—while delicate allusions were conveyed in the shape of blessings on our imaginary marriage-bed, which covered Julia's cheek with blushes, and transported me to the seventh heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER MARY—HURRIED EXIT.

Valentine. But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvia ?

Speed. She that you gaze on so as she sits at supper ?

Valentine. Hast thou observed that ? even she I mean.

Speed. Why, sir, I know her not.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

We returned, the dressing-bell had sounded, and we found the company seated, when we entered the dining-room. I never crooked a leg under mahogany with a more repulsive collection—the acidulated aspect of the women being in perfect keeping with the saffron of the Calcutta men, while the cockney department appeared inclined to be impertinent, had they only known the way. I looked at Mrs. Melville—she saw the vulgarity of the gang,

pitied, and despised it—permitting a repetition of the champagne sent her, and smiling unutterable things in return.

The ladies left us. I had what old Major H— called the “cross pint” on board, and was ready for action. I believe that the gentlemen of the establishment had previously determined to place me in Coventry, but my battle-flag was up, and among the dozen who were inclined to “bell the cat,” the individual had not been exactly selected, who was to give the hint that my company was unwelcome. Were conservative sentiments uttered, I was instantly a radical reformer—while in the next breath I sent Daniel to Australasia, and Father Mathew to the treadmill. I had accidentally amused myself the preceding evening with my pistols in the back-yard—and as the practice was very respectable, I enjoyed in consequence the privilege of an ex-chancellor, abused every body and every thing, and shifted sides at discretion.

I went to bed, and shall I ever forget the

rapture of that blessed night as I pressed the widow's empty purse to my bosom—my head—my lips—and then, for safe keeping, deposited the treasure beneath my pillow !

Next morning I missed my adored one from the breakfast-table, and I remarked that the bearing of the company towards me was scarcely civil. The cause was easily understood, and I enjoyed a secret triumph—I had supplanted the men and piqued the women. The certainty of my good fortune was confirmed—for even strangers had detected the young widow's partiality for my unworthy self.

Her absence from the breakfast-table, however, caused me some uneasiness, and I requested a shrewish chambermaid, whom I encountered in the lobby, to inform Mrs. Melville's attendant, that Captain O'Sullivan wished to speak with her for a moment.

"Mrs. Melville's attendant!" returned the angry spider-brusher, with a contemptuous toss of the head. "Like mistress like maid,

I fancy," she muttered, and proceeded down the corridor.

Morning wore heavily on, and I was miserable. Of the lady of my heart, who still remained invisible, I could obtain no information. The womankind in the drawing-room had entered into an unholy alliance against the Colonel's relict, and the very menials had joined in the conspiracy. Every *reconnaissance* I made was unsuccessful. The windows of her apartment were blinded; and when I made a third attempt to try and get even a passing glimpse of my fair enslaver, a suppressed titter from the adjacent casement, tenanted by read-head from the city, forced me to beat a retreat, and give up the affair as hopeless.

I never found a day so long—but at last the dressing-bell sounded, and the dinner summons was heard in due season from the gong. I repaired to the parlour. Generally, the company were assembled; but the widow's seat was vacant. Was she indisposed? Ere

I could reply to my own question, the door opened, and my beautiful Julia entered the apartment, and took her customary place.

I was startled as I looked at her—she was pale and agitated—and like one to whose pillow peace had been a stranger. Her smile of recognition was melancholy—I was the only one to whom it was addressed—and the coldness of the rest of the company was even more strongly marked than it had been on the preceding evening. Poor soul! she was exposed to cockney martyrdom, and all on my account. Her morning seclusion was now accounted for—like the mimosa, she shrank from vulgar observation—her artless nature had unconsciously revealed the secret of her heart—she felt she loved—and found concealment was impossible.

I never saw a more uncourteous gang collected round a dinner-table; and but for my civility, I verily believe the fair widow might as well have dined with Duke Humphrey as with Mrs. Screwup. Of course, this ill-man-

nered neglect elicited redoubled attentions from me—and I perceived with secret pleasure that my homage was not disregarded.

The dinner ended—presently the lords of the creation were left to themselves, and a duller collection than the same lords could not be found. I hastily despatched my wine, ordered my horse to the door, and rode to the common, where generally my gentle Julia walked “i’ the afternoon.”

I had decided on my course of action, resolved to risk a declaration, and trust the rest to her compassion. True, we were the acquaintances of one brief week—but from the ingenuousness of Julia’s character, you knew her intimately in an hour. One fatal circumstance almost deterred me—mistress of a splendid fortune, might she not suspect that other motives than disinterested love prompted the hurried confession? I felt how free from sordid considerations my passion was—and *coute qui coute*, I would tell my

love, and leave the rest to fortune and her humanity.

I rode an hour backwards and forwards, but no vision of the beloved one blessed my anxious sight. Evening began to close—it was idle to expect her now—and I resolved to address a billet to my mistress, and beg a formal interview next morning. I also determined to acquaint Sir Cæsar with my intended marriage. I knew that he would throw no obstacle in the way of my happiness—and the very circumstance that the object of my choice was the relict of a Colonel and a C.B. would be quite sufficient to establish her in the good graces of the commander. In the ideal construction of an epistle to Mrs. Melville, Somnus surprised me—I slept—dreamed that I had procured a special license—and that my idolised Julia had exchanged second mourning for white bombazine.

The breakfast-bell had rung its summons a quarter of an hour before I obeyed the call,

and I found the inmates of the establishment clustered round the table, with one exception: Julia was missing—and even her chair had disappeared. When I entered the room, the conversation dropped suddenly into profound silence, and every eye was turned upon me. What did this forebode? Was any impertinence intended? I felt my cheeks redden, and my brows contract, and with a steady stare I swept the table round, to ascertain the quarter from which the onset would be made. But every eye avoided mine—my challenge was not accepted—and I calmly took my place and commenced breakfast, and, I may as well acknowledge it, with but an indifferent appetite. From the unusual gravity of the assembly, I felt assured that some important event had happened, or was about to happen—and a few minutes proved that my suspicions were perfectly correct.

Mrs. Screwup gave a preparatory cough after despatching a cup of coffee to me, I

presume, as a preparative for what was about to follow.

“ Captain O'Sullivan,” observed the lady, “ since I have had the honour of presiding over this establishment, which, combining comfort with economy, I am proud to say, has given general satisfaction to those ladies and gentlemen who have favoured Belisle House with their patronage and presence—where a table distinguished by elegance and liberality—”

“ I never tasted anything so bad,” growled one of the Calcutta men, “ as the curried duck was yesterday.”

“ You'll except the sweet omelet,” observed a second.

“ This marmalade is made of carrots,” remarked a third Indian.

Now Mrs. Screwup did not wish to hear these remarks, and consequently she did not hear them.

“ As I said, Captain O'Sullivan, this house has been justly celebrated for its liberal

arrangements and select society; and I am happy to add, that the unfortunate affair that has just occurred, and by which you appear to have been a serious sufferer, is the first that—”

“What is the unfortunate affair—and how am I a serious sufferer?” I exclaimed, interrupting the address from the chair.

“Good gracious, haven't you heard it?”

“Are you not aware she has run away?”

“Carried off the pillow-cases.”

“And left the poor washerwoman unpaid,” exclaimed four young ladies, in quartetto.

“Who the devil, fair ladies, do you allude to?” I responded, petulantly.

A sugar-refiner from St. Mary Axe, who held the seat of honour at the dexter hand of Mrs. Screwup, placed a pair of spectacles with great deliberation on his nose, and took up a voluminous epistle.

“I find by this document, that the person alluded to was called Julia Melville here, but her correct name was Mary Hookhem.”

"Another of that accursed crew!" I muttered.

"And, by her own written admission, obtained under false pretence, three five pound-notes and eleven sovereigns and a half from Captain O—"

I stopped him short.

"Pardon me," I exclaimed; "I never permit strangers to amuse themselves with my affairs. Madam," I continued, addressing the proprietrix of Belisle House, "will you favour me with a short account of this most incomprehensible transaction?"

"All I have to say, Captain, is that the woman Melville here, and Hookhem there, bolted during the night through a glass-door that opens on the lawn, leaving three weeks' board and lodging unpaid, and an empty trunk by way of a keepsake. The extent of her operations out of doors remains yet to be discovered. She has had two silk dresses from Gibbs and Green, and a ring and bracelet from Jones, the jeweller."

"I think," observed the sugar-boiler, "that a perusal of her own letter will more clearly place the character of this worthless personage in its proper light." And he handed the interesting epistle of Mrs. O'Sullivan elect across the table for the perusal of her lover.

I took the paper up. My feelings were those of a man suddenly paralyzed. I turned a vacant look from the paper to the company, and observed that every eye was centred upon me. I felt my brows contract with anger, and my cheeks glow with the blush of shame—and certainly neither feeling was removed, when I read the following confessions of the fair levanter :

" 12 p.m. Friday morning.

"The clock has told the witching hour, and another day is ushered in, while in the solitude of my lonely chamber I kill the dull interval until Fanny gives the signal, in scribbling to you my latest adventures. In my former letter I prepared you for a blow-

up; but the discovery preceded my expectation—and at two hours' notice I am obliged to avoid a public exposure.

“To you, my dear Jenny, who are familiar with the private history of your friend, from the time I quitted the cottage of the old schoolmaster, my father, to become nursery-governess to Squire Jenkins, until that Irish swindler persuaded me into an elopement, under the full belief that he was a captain of dragoons, even before the hair had grown upon his head again, after having been cropped when he was committed to the Penitentiary, I shall only observe now that the adventures of the last month are equal to any which have marked my up-and-down history.

“Tired of a dramatic career and theatrical husband, whose blandishments in public were occasionally followed up at home by a sound beating or black eye, I quitted Mr. Percival and a first line of barn-business together. By good fortune and fictitious characters, I got introduced to the household

of the rich widow of Colonel Melville—and when that lady was ordered to the south of Italy, and, in consequence, broke up her establishment in England, I had risen so rapidly into favour, that, as a mark of high confidence, to me the care of the cats and her extra wardrobe were entrusted. The former duty I performed by deputy; but to the latter, as the sequel will show, I paid personal attention.

“Mrs. Melville and I were alike in height and figure; and, having selected the articles from her clothes’-presses that I required, I started for a Welsh watering-place to try my fortune, and, as I had borrowed the widow’s wardrobe, I thought I might as well adopt the name. My success was as rapid as I could have hoped, for I speedily made conquest of a country clergyman—and, but for an unfortunate accident, bade fair to become mistress of the parsonage within the month.

“On the day that my clerical admirer had formally requested permission to pay me his

addresses, the *table d'hôte* received an addition to the company. The stranger was a young man whose moustache and military carriage proclaimed him a light dragoon. He noticed me particularly from the moment he took his place, made anxious inquiries from his neighbour, obtained an introduction after dinner, and learned all further information from myself. I thought that on so slight an acquaintance, his manner towards me was rather too easy and unreserved ; and, as the parson exhibited symptoms of jealousy, I determined to control my fancy for flirtation, repress the freedom of the bold dragoon, and, instead of losing the substance for the shadow, wisely secure the living of Bromley cum Bellington, and the Reverend Joshua Singleton—but fate forbade it.

“I had been walking in the garden, and was returning slowly through a shaded alley, when suddenly a man's arm clasped my waist, and when I started and turned round, the intruder snatched a kiss. It was the young dragoon—and however, under different cir-

cumstances, I might have encouraged a flirtation, the easy insolence of his conduct piqued my pride, and elicited an indignant outburst.

“ ‘What, my dearest aunt!’ he exclaimed, ironically, ‘have you forgotten your nephew and heir-at-law? What miraculous changes a southern sky has wrought! You are younger by ten years, and—saints and angels!—you went to Italy with blue eyes, and now you come back with black ones.’

“In a moment the truth flashed upon me—it was Frederick Melville—I had often heard of him—a wild, dissipated young man—and I was completely at his mercy. Conditions were entered into—one was my immediate departure from ——, and three days were permitted. It is enough to say that before one elapsed, from the reckless character of the dragoon, the parson saw sufficient reasons for declining the honour I had conceded. Melville, with his own wild military notions of honour, preserved my secret inviolably, and I left the hotel of ——as I

entered it—Mrs. Melville—at least, in name.

“I had failed in Wales, but why should I not succeed in England? I took an instant resolution, and boldly headed hither, and found no difficulty in gaining an *entrée* to this establishment. One moiety of the company were Indians—their knowledge of the world must, therefore, be post-dated thirty years at least; the other portions were cockneys, and they knew nothing of aught that passes beyond the boundaries of Pimlico and Tower Hill. This general ignorance was favourable—but, as it proved, unfortunately, not a man of the gang could be turned to account.

“I may here connect my narrative by telling you, that on my way to Leamington I encountered Fanny Meadows. It appeared from Fanny's story that I had quitted the stage in proper time. The *corps dramatique*, after a season's starvation, were scattered—Mr. Percival had been sent to the treadmill for stealing fowls; and Miss Meadows, when

I met her, was 'earning a respectable crust,' as she termed it, 'by fortune-telling.' I wanted a maid—Miss Meadows wanted a mistress—and in such relations we took up our quarters in 'Mrs. Screwup's boarding establishment.'

"My money vanished; and I decided, after a consultation with Fanny, to victimize the tradesmen and levant. I did it to trifling account—a mere bagatelle—thirty or forty pounds—silks and shawls—but not a guinea. Landlady looking shy—washerwoman clamorous—when, lo! a victim came."

I felt that I was about to figure in, and dropped the letter. Hang it! 'twere well to know the worst, and I continued the perusal of Miss Hookhem's epistle.

"Matters were desperate—a general panic in and out of doors—tradesmen called thrice a-day—and Mrs. Screwup politely intimated that payments were expected weekly—Fanny agreed, at a midnight consultation, that, in

her refined *parlance*, we should 'cut our lucky' without delay.

"A visiter arrived—his place was opposite to mine at table—I saw the soft spot upon his countenance—played my good luck against his weakness—and, but for a miracle, would have succeeded.

"Will you start, Jenny, when I tell you he was your countryman—a regular Irishman—a great O followed by three syllables? Of all the spoons I ever met—of all the muffs I ever dropped upon—I give the palm decidedly to Captain O'Sullivan!"

The paper *dropped* from me—I pleaded guilty—a muff, by everything spoony! I turned a page. No use in following *seriatim* the pleasing details, but I culled fragments as I skimmed the writing with my eye. "Fanny, capital as the forlorn one, and my empty purse, although stale as ring-dropping, perfectly successful." A few pleasing comments on my character followed, and then came the action of the drama.

“ All is packed—and Fanny has employed a poacher’s tax-cart. It strikes one—Heaven send that she has not taken too much gin! That is a cursed drawback to her utility. How handy is it for midnight flitting to put one’s loose things into pillow-slips! Heigh-ho! I’ll close this letter—pop it into the next post-office—and prepare you for my re-appearance. I fear that Fanny has got lushy—and, if so, I’m ruined. No! sand against the windows!—herself and the poacher underneath—all’s right. Pleasant dreams to you, Captain O’Sullivan!—Mrs. Screwup, I owe you three weeks’ rent—don’t you wish you may get it? Secure my old lodgings—and, when we meet, you shall laugh at a full detail of my Leamington adventures.”

“ And now, Captain O’Sullivan, as you and I are the chief sufferers, what course would you propose should be adopted?” said the proprietrix of the select establishment.

“ I am of opinion,” said the sugar-boiler, “ that a personal description should be for-

warded to the head office of police, and the fullest details given through the papers of the transaction."

"Excuse me, sir," I replied; "so far as I am concerned, I have no ambition to go the rounds of the press in company with Messrs. Gibbs and Green, Mr. Jones, the jeweller, and Mrs. Melville, or Percival, or Hookhem. Ah! *Shawn Crughadore!*" I mentally ejaculated, as I hurried from the room, "your parting admonition was prophetic—if ever there was an ass in human form, I admit myself the thing. To be fooled once was bad enough—but still the cook had a two years' character to exhibit—but to be 'done brown' by Mrs. Melville — a hybrid, between a strolling actress and a lady's-maid, without a rag of character at all. By Saint Patrick! it was a shrewd guess at the Welch inn, when they fancied that I would be the better for a keeper!"

CHAPTER VIII.

I LEVANT FROM MRS. SCREWUP'S ESTABLISHMENT.

2d Outlaw.—Whither travel you?*Valentine.*—To Verona.*1st Out.*—Whence came you?*Val.*—From Milan.*3d Out.*—Have you long sojourn'd there?*Val.*—Some sixteen months; and longer might I have staid,

If crooked fortune had not thwarted me.

1st Out.—What, were you banished thence?*Val.*—I was.*2d Out.*—For what offence?*Val.*—For that which now torments me to rehearse.*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

It may be readily believed that, after my *affair de cœur* with the amiable relict of Lieutenant-Colonel Melville, C.B., Mrs. Screwup's establishment, notwithstanding the admitted liberality of its arrangements, was not exactly

a domicile in which I should wish to live and die. To be victimized was merely my desert—but to be fooled by the daughter of a village pedagogue—a custodee of cats—was intolerable. And yet, I verily believe that my assinine simplicity did not lower me in the estimation of the company. I overheard the sugar-baker observe aside, that “the young man must be pretty well off, as he didn’t care *a dump* about the money;” and sandy-head from the Minorities, opining that “pity melts the soul to love,” was liberal in her sympathy, and redoubled her attentions.

I am naturally polite, and of course was civil in return. Miss Stubbs imagined that to strike boldly was to conquer—while her averted look, and smothered sigh, were intended to intimate, in “mute eloquence,” the existing state of her affections. Did I walk into the grounds—half-an-acre, short measure, with the usual allowance of bowers and busts, rockeries and rural benches—Miss Stubbs was certain to be there *by accident*. That she was

bent upon committing matrimony was quite clear, for she had advanced even unto family revelations. I was assured that if "the governor"—thereby meaning the old drysalter—continued in business, he might have retired years ago had he pleased; and divers anecdotes were narrated of "Aunt Hubbard," of Bishopsgate Street Within, who knew no end to her money, and loved Miss S. like an only child.

When a young lady touches upon expectancies, you may rest assured that she has housekeeping in her eye. I naturally became alarmed—and that evening an attempt of the young lady to establish a pedal communication beneath the table, operated as a regular notice to quit. To endure with placidity the pressure of a kidskin slipper, I felt would be merely a step preliminary to one of the male Stubbs requesting accurate information touching my intentions towards his sister, or "the governor" himself coming to the scratch at once, with an intimation that he would fork

up three thousand, "and no mistake"—*the rowdy* being at his banker's—with an encouraging hint that, *post mortem*, he would cut up to perfect satisfaction. When a man is not inclined to show a bold front, the sooner he retreats the better. Mrs. Screwup's account current was quietly obtained and discharged; the next morning saw me roofing the branch-coach to the railway-station; and the intelligence of my evasion from a boarding-establishment, whose arrangements were admitted to be on a scale of unequalled liberality, was first communicated to Amelia Stubbs by Mrs. Screwup at the breakfast-table, and, as I discovered afterwards, produced a sensation among the company, almost equal to that when Mrs. Melville was with due formality declared a levanter.

In London, nobody was in town—my melancholy increased—and I began to seriously consider whether I should not become, like Baron Geramb, a brother of La Trappe, or

take up a squatter settlement in the backwoods of Kentucky. I jobbed a horse—took to solitary ridings—visited heaths revered by departed highwaymen, and forests disencumbered of their timber, and not affording concealment for a hare. Even in these solitudes—if aught be solitary within an hour's ride of "the great metropolis"—my evil genius haunted my outgoings and my incomings; and not a cockney couple could steal away from a gipsying-party, to bill and coo in peace and quietness, but, like another Paul Pry, I would stumble on them in their gentle dalliance, before the second pressure of the lady's hand. Every fallen tree brought the perfidious cat-keeper to my recollection—and if I managed to forget my misfortunes for a moment, some city vocalist from an adjoining clump would dispel my musings with

Love! my Mary, dwells with thee!

One day I had undergone complicated

annoyances, and registered a vow in heaven, never again to trust my person on heath or common within a day's march of the Monument. And yet my sufferings were not unavenged; and were the accounts between my persecutors and myself correctly squared, in annoyance inflicted, the balance would, I fancy, be on my side. In one clump, I disturbed a *tête-à-tête*—and in another corner, annihilated a proposal of marriage, when “Pa’s consent” was trembling on the wooed one’s lips. But in a coppice, I received a sickener in return; having dropped on a score of romping citizens, engaged in a pleasant game played by fashionables among the higher circles who visit Greenwich fair, and designated by its admirers “kissing in the ring”—an agreeable young lady screamed a passing invitation to join the party, but, like another Mazeppa, I rejected her overtures, and went off at score.

I pulled up at a closed gate that opened on

the highway, and observed, leaning against its post, the only thing of human form, which for that morning I had contemplated with satisfaction.

This object was a man—and none I think would pass him by unnoticed. His figure was tall, gaunt, and powerful — his face regular in every outline, but singularly repulsive—his age it would have been impossible to guess, it might be fifty or five-and-twenty, its indications were so contradictory. His dress was squalid as a mendicant's—his air, when I desired him to open the gate, careless almost to insolence. He did my bidding, however—I flung him sixpence in return—and, without thanking me, he picked up and pocketed the coin. I rode on a few paces—in the blackguard independence of the out-cast, there was something curiously attractive, and I pulled up and addressed him.

“ You seem in poverty, my friend—out of work, I presume?”

"Work!" returned the fellow with a sneer;
"do I look like one that *would* work?"

"Why faith! no—you look much like a man who would—"

I paused.

"I'll finish the sentence for you," continued the pauper—"rather rob."

"Egad, you have hit my meaning exactly—you have no trade?" I added.

"I have fifty," was the reply.

"A soldier in your time?"

"Yes."

"At sea occasionally?"

The stranger nodded an assent.

"Could you name your other callings?"

"They would be rather tedious to enumerate. I have been a player and a gipsy—a clown and a quack—a smuggler and a spy—a pedlar and a pugilist—touter to an auction-room—bonnet in a hell—swept a crossing—conducted an omnibus—was mute to an undertaker—and, pardon my blushes when I own

it, follower of a bailiff, and assistant to a pawn-broker."

"And what are you doing now?"

"Leaning against this gate for want of better employment," was the sarcastic answer.

"Have you dined?"

"That ceremony I have not gone through these last three weeks."

"Have you no home?"

"Yes—the highway; but do not be alarmed, your purse and person are secure—I am a wanderer, and not a footpad."

"No friends?"

"I am a pauper—did you ever know a poor man have a friend?"

"Well—no relations?"

"Doubtless I had, but I never knew them. For aught I know to the contrary, I may be heir-apparent to a peer, or the offspring of a pickpocket."

"You are a strange fellow. I have ordered dinner at the Chequers in yonder village—you shall have one, if you please."

“ Were it but for the novelty of the thing, I will accept the offer.”

I slacked the reins, rode slowly on, and the outcast followed. On alighting at the Chequers, I gave directions that the stranger should be accommodated at the tap, gave my horse to the landlord, and took possession of the parlour of a clean and unpretending hostelry, where, after my lonely rides, I generally halted to have dinner.

When I ascertained that the outcast had obtained the refreshments I had ordered for him, he was introduced to the parlour. Poor wretch ! a comfortable dinner appeared to have smoothed down the ferocity of his nature, for he condescended to thank me for my kindness. Not only his feelings but his features had undergone a change—and in the reckless being before me, I fancied I could discover relics of manly beauty, which, in “ wild youth,” had been envied by one sex, and admired by the other. I offered him brandy—he drank again and again—his rigid fea-

tures gradually relaxed—the sneer was exchanged for a smile—the harshness of a grating voice softened by degrees—and as he placed the empty wineglass on the table, he thus addressed me :

“Forgive my rudeness to you in the forest ; I was just then smarting under vulgar insolence, and men who, at three hours’ after noon, have neither breakfasted in the morning, nor supped on the preceding night, are not in the happiest temper to turn away the smitten cheek, and present the other for a buffet.”

I stared at the outcast. The tone of voice was gentlemanly, his language fluent and correct ; and yet there he stood, a thing of rags, a walking scarecrow.

“In Heaven’s name, who are you ?”

“You ask more than I can answer,” was the reply. “Come, would you hear the revelations of ambitious love ?”

“Ambitious love !” I exclaimed.

“No wonder that you smile. Ay, too ambitious love ! More brandy. Ha ! there’s

life in that. I feel it course through every vein, and warm this frozen heart. Listen, sir."

I signed to him to be seated; he took a chair, and thus commenced a "strange eventful history."

CHAPTER IX.

CONFESSIONS OF AN OUTCAST.

Mess.—I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beatrice.—No—an he were, I would burn my study.
But, I pray you, who is his companion?"

Much Ado about Nothing.

"I knew no parents. I was left in a basket on the steps of Lord ——'s mansion, in Portman Square, on a night when the Prince honoured my lady's fête with his presence. From the place selected, and the time chosen for my exposure, I infer the gentility of my parentage.

"I was nursed by the gamekeeper's wife—introduced in due time to the third table of the servants' hall—kicked for a year or two by every menial on the establishment—fancied

by the young peer—patronised consequently by his lady mother—rose rapidly into favouritism—divided the affections of the marchioness with a French poodle—became playmate of the heir—acquired the education from his tutor which his dull intellects could not receive—and at eighteen travelled with him as companion. After two years we returned—he, twenty-one, I younger by a year.

“My history, were it detailed at length, would reach over volumes. For you, two or three rough sketches will be sufficient.

“At twenty-one, Lord Edward —— was five feet five—thin, rickety, and consumptive. Like the body, the mind was imbecile. He was cold, proud, and uncompanionable, and, from constitutional infirmity, unable to enter into the pleasures of the world. No equal sought his friendship—no woman's eye brightened at his approach. Without the tastes or talents which charm a secluded life, Lord Edward was in habit and manner almost a hermit. His father's soul and thoughts were

centered in the political movements of the day—and, though the existence of an ancient name and lineage rested on frail chances of continuance, and hung on the life of a feebly-constituted youth, the Marquis of —— strained after wealth and honours with as much avidity, as if the foundation of his house had been adamantine.

“To perpetuate the noble name of ——, Lord Edward’s early marriage had been decided on; and while we were absent on the continent, every preliminary had been arranged for a union immediately after his return, with the daughter of an Earl. That there was the slightest necessity to consult Lord Edward on the subject, his noble father never believed—and the perfect indifference with which the young lord received intelligence of an early union with a lady he had never seen, justified the marquis in the opinion he had formed.

“I had apparently taken more interest in the projected union of my friend than himself, and had, therefore, made extensive inquiries

touching the noble family with whom he was so soon to be allied. The world's estimate of the Earl was not favourable. In youth a *roué*, in middle-age a gambler, he had been driven from society by enormous losses, and obliged to submit to seclusion from the world, and bury himself in a retirement he felt to be intolerable. A tyrant father, he had forced his only son to become an alien — his only crime, a refusal to join his infatuated parent in raising sums of money, to dissipate on the race-course or at the hazard-table. Darker crimes were imputed to the Earl. He had killed unfairly in a duel upon the continent a gentleman from whom he had won a heavy sum, and who had openly declared that he had been cheated; and a young lady, his own ward, as it was whispered, had been seduced by her false guardian, and afterwards spirited away. By Lord Edward's father, the political influence, and not the private character of this unworthy nobleman, was only taken into consideration.

“I have described the heir to the title and estates of the ancient house of ——; and may I add now a personal sketch of the playmate of his youth—the companion of his manhood—myself! Start not. He was then a model for a statuary—the mould was faultless—and woman said the face had all that wins the favour of the softer sex. He had profited by early education, and the advantages of travel had not been lost upon him. To exterior advantages, a daring spirit and latent ambition, burning for worldly distinction, were united. Such was the companion of Lord Edward ——, such the wreck of manhood—the thing of misery—the ragged outcast on whom you look!”

He paused; a burning tear stole down his sunburnt cheek, and every limb and feature quivered as if an ague-fit had smitten him. I filled the glass again—he drained it to the bottom—and in another moment regained composure, and thus continued:—

“An early day was named for our departure

for the north, where Lord Edward was to make acquaintance with the noble family to whom he was about to be allied, and, in due form, be presented to his future bride. Of course, I was to accompany him; for, from his nervous temperament, every thought and movement was under my direction, and without me Lord Edward was helpless as an infant. His father remarked the infirmity of his son's character, and saw the stay on which he rested. But it seemed to have escaped the deep penetration of the wily marquis, that a more dangerous companion could not have been selected; for, mentally and physically, the contrast between us was too glaring. Our visit to the Earl's proved that truth.

“The indifference which Lord Edward had evinced to the hymeneal arrangements concluded by his father, gradually gave place to alarm, as we drew nearer to the residence of the bride elect; and, when we entered the park-gates, he became painfully excited. To his nervous disposition, a new place and

strange family were sufficiently formidable, had he been but a common-place visitor; but the serious nature of the engagements which we came to ratify, to one like Lord Edward, were absolutely formidable. I used every argument to overcome his timidity; but to induce confidence was impossible. When we descended to the saloon, after making our toilet, he leaned on me for support, trembling like a girl. To the Earl we had been already introduced, and a footman threw open the drawing-room door, and announced us. With that ceremony all self-possession appeared to desert my unfortunate friend; and when we entered the presence of Lady —— and her daughter, Lord Edward, who had fallen back a step or two, looked pale and affrighted, as if he were advancing to execution.

“The Earl unfortunately was absent, and a painful mistake occurred. The persons of the visitors were mistaken: I was supposed to be the gallant suitor, and Lord Edward his humble companion. Under this misconcep-

tion, I was presented to Lady Caroline by the Countess; and to both that introduction occasioned present embarrassment and future misery.

“ I have seen loveliness of every grade and in every clime; and were I to live life over, I would declare that she who met my eye was the peerless one among woman. A detail of beauty from lips like mine would be disgusting—a mere outline is enough. Lady Caroline was nineteen, but you might fancy her older by a year or two. Her charms were perfectly matured, and her beauty commanding. To a figure of the finest proportions, a face of singular loveliness was united—she was a splendid creature altogether: and yet, if in Lady Caroline there were much to idolize, there was probably as much to dread.

“ When the first gaze of unqualified admiration had ended, and the eye was permitted to examine calmly that matchless specimen of Nature's handiwork, a heart cold enough

to find a fault would not be disappointed. The haughty character of the face—a manner which bespoke impatience of contradiction—air, walk, and carriage—all demanded admiration. Her beauty's spell was not that which steals imperceptibly upon the heart by soft approaches. Homage was required as a right; but, at so proud a shrine, timid love would fear to make his offering.

“When the Countess took my hand, and was about to present it to her daughter, an approving smile brightened the fair one's eye, and the haughty features of Lady Caroline evinced a secret satisfaction. To me, the personal mistake was painfully humiliating; and while vanity was gratified, pride was wounded to the quick.

“‘Pardon me, Lady ——,’ I muttered; ‘allow me to introduce my noble friend;’ and I turned to Lord Edward.

“Never did an unexpected announcement occasion more evident annoyance to all concerned. To me, it was an *exposé* of depen-

dency; and the Countess was mortified in having mistaken a shadow for the substance. My nervous companion had marked the flush of approbation with which Lady Caroline had viewed her husband in expectancy; but all these united fell immeasurably short of the agonized disappointment which the changing features of the bride elect betrayed.

“ In a moment the blush of pleasure faded from her cheeks—her rosy lips were bloodless—the brows contracted—and eyes, whose language had invited love, exchanged it for an expression of scornful indifference. Poor Lord Edward timidly advanced—the lady’s hand was formally delivered to him by her mother—he trembled as he took it—and, when he strove to speak, the muttered words were unintelligible. With a contemptuous glance the proud beauty surveyed the person her mother had presented, and then, turning her eyes in disgust away, the curling lip told that the impression had been unfavourable.

“ The evening of that inauspicious day was, to all parties, any thing but agreeable. The Earl, a proud, unamiable man, was not a person calculated to remove the constitutional timidity with which his future son-in-law was afflicted—the manners of his lady were cold and ceremonious—and the bride elect seemed to endure, but not return, the attentions of a suitor whom she evidently despised. Of the party, I was the most at ease ; and when we separated after supper, I overheard the Earl mention me in flattering terms to Lord Edward, while vanity told me that Lady Caroline’s ‘ good night ’ was strikingly different from the cold formality with which she parted from her lord elect—him, whom in a brief month, she was to promise at the altar to love, honour, and obey.

“ A fortnight passed, and I found myself in a position exquisitely painful. At the desire of Lord Edward, I had wooed a bride by proxy ; and the Earl, perfectly acquainted with the proud and uncompromising temper

of his daughter, tacitly entrusted to me the delicate task of removing objections to a union, which at times threatened to overturn preliminary arrangements, and interpose obstacles fatal to the contemplated marriage. A close intimacy between Lady Caroline and myself resulted. When my friend accompanied the Earl in his rides, I was the escort of the intended bride. At first she listened with disgust — again with impatience — and, finally, she imperatively desired me not even to allude to an alliance, which every hour became more dreaded and detested.

“ What strange beings men are ! From his extreme sensibility it might be supposed that Lord Edward would have recoiled from accepting a hand, when the heart that should accompany it was peremptorily refused ; but, by a singular infatuation, an alliance he had contemplated with indifference became now the engrossing object of his soul. His feelings towards Lady Caroline were inexplicable—he loved and feared her.

“ I had passed an hour in his chamber, and candidly informed him that the progress of his suit was worse than slow. I left him for the night, and, on retiring to my own apartment, found a *billet* attached to my pillow. I broke the seal—it was ‘ brief as woman’s love,’ and ran thus ;—

“ ‘ *At one o’clock meet me in the library.*’

“ Meet whom? That peremptory mandate I knew could only come from *one*.

“ The clock struck twelve while I read this mysterious summons. I sat down and thought of my singular position. I, the agent of another, and wooing one I loved to desperation—one so immeasurably removed beyond the possibility of ever being mine, that the very thought was madness. And yet her conduct to me was inexplicable. Haughty and impatient, she courted interviews again and again ; and, after insulting rejections of Lord Edward’s suit, gave me fresh opportunities of renewing my importunities in his favour. I was at no loss to detect the secret

motives which influenced the haughty fair one; and though she fancied it was unperceived, I had marked already the struggle between pride and love. The state of her affections was past concealment, and I had unconsciously won a heart already destined for another!

“The clock chimed—the hour of meeting struck—and I stole quietly along the thickly-carpeted corridor to the place appointed for our secret interview. Punctual as I was, she was already there; and when I softly unclosed the door, I found Lady Caroline seated at the centre table, a solitary taper before her, and her head reclined upon her hand, ‘in sorrow, not in anger.’

“‘You are true to the appointed time,’ observed the lady, assuming an indifferent manner, which ill-accorded with pale cheeks and heavy eyes. ‘My maid succeeded in conveying safely the billet I entrusted to her?’

“‘She did, Lady Caroline.’

“ ‘ I would have requested this meeting verbally—but after an interview with my father, I found that you had retired to Lord Edward’s chamber. I have written to him. In the morning he will receive my letter.’

“ ‘ May I hope that the communication is more favourable than the sentiments you expressed this morning, when I ventured to urge a kinder consideration of my poor friend’s suit?’

“ ‘ It is merely a repetition of what I have told the Earl this evening.’

“ ‘ And what may that be?’ and I assumed an indifference alien to the heart, as, in breathless uncertainty, I waited for the first words she uttered—words which would encourage the wildest hopes, or annihilate presumptuous love.

“ For a moment she raised her eyes, and they met mine. The blood rushed suddenly to her pale cheeks—her forehead flushed—and in a tone of voice in which scorn and

tenderness were blended, she passionately exclaimed, 'Cold-hearted man! Must woman tell the secret of her heart?'

"The spell was broken. Next moment I was kneeling at her feet, while her head drooped upon my shoulder, and a flood of tears followed the avowal of her love. A scene of madness followed. We plighted faith, and swore that death only should divide us. Every prudential consideration had vanished—the gulph that rank and fortune had interposed between us was overlooked—I, a nameless man—a miserable dependant—I aspire to a hand, for which the heir to the haughtiest house in Britain had sued in vain. In a dream of felicity that seemed superhuman, an hour passed away. The clock struck two—'twas time to separate—so we both said—but 'parting's such sweet sorrow,' that the chimes had sounded twice before I tore myself from my charming companion, and with noiseless footstep stole through the corridor, and regained my lonely apartment.

“ To sleep was impossible, and I asked myself, was what had passed a reality or a dream.

“ The rapture of the moment,

When first her love the loved one tells,

had engrossed Lady Caroline and me so entirely, that sublunary matters were not regarded, and all I learned of her evening interview with the Earl was, that the scene had been on both sides stormy and disagreeable. We had arranged a meeting for the morrow—an affair in no way difficult to manage, from the intimacy which existed. My haughty mistress did not appear at the breakfast-table—I guessed the cause—and the gloomy expression of her father's countenance confirmed my suspicions. A letter was placed in Lord Edward's hand—as he read it, his agitation was painfully apparent—he rose and left the room—and the Earl instantly followed. In an hour I received a summons to the library, and there found my

young friend and his intended father-in-law in earnest conversation.

“ The scene of the preceding night vividly returned as I gazed over the apartment. At the table where the Earl and his guest were seated, I had knelt at the feet of his proud daughter, and heard her avow undying love for one, who could not even boast that he possessed a name. Here, our vows of eternal attachment were interchanged, and her lips were pressed by mine to seal the contract.

“ ‘ Sit down, Mr. Milford,’ said the Earl, as he pointed to a chair. ‘ We have sent for you, as a trusty friend, to communicate an unexpected embarrassment which has arisen through the silly caprice of a wayward girl, and beg your assistance and advice in smoothing the difficulty away.’

“ I bowed, and Lord Edward briefly observed, that, from the tone of Lady Caroline’s letter, he feared any attempt to remove the lady’s objections to the alliance would prove hopeless. I had noticed the stern displeasure

of the Earl's face at breakfast, for which my secret interview with his daughter had prepared me ; but now there was an expression in the features amounting to ferocity, as he bit his pallid lip, and muttered with a deep imprecation, that 'never had the object on which he had fixed his heart been thwarted, nor, while he had life, ever should it be.' I read his character and trembled—the Earl was a determined and vindictive man, who would throw every softer feeling to the winds, and bend or break the spirit that dared to oppose itself to his. A long and unsatisfactory conversation followed—it ended as I anticipated—the Earl would not trust himself a second time with the refractory beauty—Lord Edward's timidity and pride forbade him to seek an interview—I was supposed to be the person who might probably obtain a patient hearing—and, accredited by her father and rejected suitor, I requested and obtained permission to visit the *boudoir* of the wayward beauty.

“ When I entered the apartment her maid retired, and we were left *tête-à-tête*, Claudine undertaking to keep watch and ward, and secure us from interruption. I will not attempt a description of an interview where ‘madness ruled the hour,’ and every prudential consideration was rejected. An elopement was decided on—and had I a sufficiency of common sense to have looked to consequences, the tameless spirit of Lady Caroline would have swept away every obstacle that would have opposed it.

“ If personal vanity, on my part, was amply gratified, every better principle should have revolted from the wild prospect that lay before me. To the Earl, my conduct was at least inhospitable—to Lord Edward, false and ungrateful—to her, the cause of all, still more inexcusable. She knew not the circumstances of my disgraceful birth—she never dreamed that the humblest serf that toiled in her father’s domains was my superior—I could perceive, that to veil her pride,

and stoop even to be the wife of a private gentleman, had caused a deadly struggle; but were she told that I had been casually picked up, and was indebted for name to the menial who found me—what would her feelings be at an alliance with a foundling? I was owner of a few hundred pounds; whence came they? from the pocket of him I was deceiving—and the hand that supported me, and the house which took the outcast in, was destined from that base ingrate to receive the deadliest blow which could be inflicted upon it.

“Lady Caroline was, in her own right, nobly dowered; another year would bring an ample independence, and the liberality of the family I was about to injure supplied the means by which the interval could be passed. It was desirable to gain a few days' time, and Lady Caroline yielded to necessity. She was but a sorry actress—and her forced endurance of Lord Edward's timid assiduities would have been evident even to a stranger. Upon her

father this compromising conduct was not lost—his suspicions were awakened—he tried Claudine—gold succeeded—and she betrayed us.

“ On the succeeding night we were to quit —— Castle for the continent, attended by our faithless confidante. Every preparation had been made, and Claudine, of course, was busied in packing her lady's wardrobe. I had secured post-horses, with some difficulty, and, as I fancied, our intended evasion was unsuspected. During the morning I had no opportunity of conversing with Lady Caroline, but we met in the drawing-room before dinner, and none but ourselves were present. I perceived that something had flurried the fair fugitive—she was pale—her manner agitated.

“ ‘ Be cautious,’ she replied, to a hurried inquiry. ‘ I fear we are betrayed. I saw my father's valet part from Claudine in the shrubbery. To thwart him in a trifling matter would be dangerous—in his present

object—one on whose success his heart is fixed, to cross his path were fatal. Observe him—I know his temper well. If he frown upon me, fear nothing; if he smile, then dread the worst. Think not that with woman's timidity I blench at the coming trial, and, because the sky is clouded, would now hold back. No—at the appointed hour, come good, come ill, I shall be at the park wicket. Until our meeting, be circumspect. The door opens. At one, we meet for the last time in the library.'

"She ceased; the last concluding sentence was ominous. *For the last time.* Prophetic phrase! It was indeed the last time.

"The dinner passed in dull formality, and never did a less hilarious group assemble round a festive board. Lord Edward seemed in wretched spirits, and Lady Caroline's assumed indifference was forced and unnatural. The Earl alone was perfectly at ease, and played the agreeable inimitably. I remembered his daughter's warning—danger lurked

in every smile, and I felt that the wine-pledge interchanged between the host and me, could wishes have affected it, would have been poisonous. I never met a more exquisite dissembler. No word or look betrayed the inward workings of his malignant spirit—and, when we deserted the hall for the drawing-room, more than once he addressed his daughter as ‘dear Caroline.’

“The evening wore away, chime after chime sounded from the belfry, and at eleven o'clock we parted for the night. Lord Edward complained of headache, and retired directly to his chamber; and I, after bidding the ladies a formal ‘good night,’ sought my apartment to wait ‘the trysted hour,’ and, as I hoped, keep my last secret appointment with my future bride.

“The interval which occurred was one of painful suspense; the gloomiest apprehensions haunted my mind, and at the slightest sound my heart palpitated. A feeling of some impending calamity oppressed my spirits, and

in vain I strove to rally my courage, and nerve myself for the daring step which now was unavoidable. I fancied the stroke from the clock-tower as it beat *one* vibrated through the long corridor like a death-knell. I rose and obeyed the summons—and, as I entered the library, Lady Caroline unclosed a private door, and advanced with trembling steps to meet me.

“ In a female so young, I had never witnessed a prouder or more daring spirit, but to-night the woman had become paramount, and she was unusually depressed.

“ We sat down upon an ottoman—I endeavoured to remove her apprehensions, and had partially succeeded. She fancied that Claudine was faithful, and that her interview with the Earl's valet was merely an *affaire de cœur*. Still neither of us felt at ease—and the slightest noise created an alarm, which she evinced, and I concealed.

“ ‘ Caroline,’ I whispered, as my arm clasped her waist, and her head rested on my

shoulder, 'one day more, and we shall be beyond the power of those who would sever the union of hearts which love as ours do.'

" 'Would that we were!' she answered. 'While within my father's reach, the wretch prostrate beneath the lion's paw is not in more imminent peril. Oh! did you know him—at the bare thought of rousing him to vengeance, *I*—and I am no coward—I tremble.'

" 'Courage!' I exclaimed; 'parental tyranny shall be exchanged for devoted love. This bosom, sweet one, shall be your resting-place—and one day more shall make you mine for ever.'

" 'Yours! audacious villain!' exclaimed a voice of thunder, as every door of the apartment flew open, and men with lights and weapons rushed in.

" 'The Earl, with a pistol in either hand, advanced—the ottoman divided us—and although Lady Caroline clung upon my arm, he raised and snapped the flint. The pistol

did not explode, and, muttering a deep curse, he flung it on the carpet, and changed it for its fellow. I, by a desperate impulse, caught up a book from the table, and, as the murderer levelled his second weapon, I flung it at him. At the moment of explosion the book smote him heavily on the arm—the ball diverged—a cry—a fall—told that it had struck his daughter. I knew no more—a blow from behind stretched me on the carpet—I became insensible, and when reason returned—Oh, God! I cannot proceed.”

The outcast became convulsed—his features writhed—his limbs trembled. He clutched the flask. Poor wretch!—the only antidote for misery like his was that balm of desperation—brandy.

After a long pause, the wanderer continued his melancholy story :

“ When recollection gradually returned, I found myself in a carriage which appeared to travel rapidly ; but from the obscurity of the night, I could neither ascertain the direction

we were driving in, nor discover whether I was alone, or had companions in the vehicle. I felt my position uneasy—my head was exquisitely painful—and the movement increased the agony I suffered, when I endeavoured to raise myself in the carriage. I groaned.

“ ‘He is not dead,’ remarked a voice beside me, in whose foreign accents I recognized those of the French valet of the Earl.

“ ‘Then he has a skull not to be broken by a poker; for, by Heaven! the blow I struck would have felled an ox,’ returned a second voice.

“ A confused recollection of the scene in the library returned. I strove to question my companions, but the words died on my lips in feeble mutterings—my head swam—I fainted, and knew no more.

“ When consciousness came back, and I awoke as if from a fevered dream, I found myself stretched upon a mattress in a room, or rather cell, for the window was grated and the roof arched. A burning thirst tormented

me — it was now broad daylight, and my dizzy eye fell upon a water-pitcher. I strove in vain to reach it—my hand fell powerless upon the bed-covering — and, like another Tantalus, with the means beside me, I could not slake a thirst which seemed insatiable. As I gazed in agonizing despair on the water, bolts were withdrawn, the door unclosed, and a man of strange and savage appearance entered.

“ ‘ Ho ! ’ he exclaimed, ‘ alive—I see ! ’

“ ‘ Water ! water ! ’ I feebly articulated.

“ ‘ No scarcity of that here,’ he growled, as he raised the pitcher to my burning lips. As I drank deeply again and again, the fellow eyed me with an infernal sneer.

“ ‘ Well, how marvellously the world wags ! ’ he muttered. ‘ Claret yesterday at my lord’s table—but to-day an humbler beverage serves your turn.’

“ ‘ Where am I ? ’

“ ‘ Pshaw ! ask no impertinent questions. Let’s see your head.’

“ He roughly turned me, and I expressed the dreadful pain I suffered by a scream of agony.

“ ‘ Bah !’ said the ruffian, ‘ what ails the man ? Upon my conscience ! the Earl has some hard strikers in his household ; and one of them made a tolerable opening in your skull last night. Lie quietly.’

“ With savage indifference, but evidently with some skill, the fellow proceeded to dress and bandage my wounded head ; and, while the operation proceeded, it seemed to cause him little anxiety whether he inflicted personal or mental pain the most:

“ ‘ Humph !’ he muttered ; ‘ I don’t think the skull is fractured, after all. And so nothing but an Earl’s daughter would content ye ! Quiet, I say—the job is nigh completed. And you who were employed to seek my lady for your lord, must woo her on your own account ! There—’tis done—and not a surgeon within sixty miles could patch, *secundem artem*, a damaged skull in shorter time. Pray,

from whom shall I require my fee? You, or your kind host, the Earl?

“ ‘For God’s sake,—more water.’

“ ‘Oh! of that I promised you plenty. Drink,’ and again he placed the pitcher to my lips.

“ ‘Where—where am I? Is this a gaol?’

“ ‘A gaol!’ exclaimed the ruffian with a sneer; ‘would you find the comforts of this chamber in a prison? and could a gentleman of my appearance and address be mistaken for a gaoler?’

“ ‘Tell me not that I am not under restraint,’ I returned passionately. ‘I am incarcerated—in a prison—a—’

“ He had folded the dressings up, and prepared to quit the cell, but stopped a moment in the doorway.

“ ‘And so you fancy yourself in gaol?’

“ ‘I am certain of it,’ was the reply.

“ ‘Well, how people will deceive themselves; you are only—’

“ ‘Where? where?’

“ ‘Only in—a *mad-house*!’ he said, and

slammed the door—the bolts were turned—and I was left in misery and solitude.

“Six weeks passed. My recovery was slow; indeed, at one time, doubtful; but though the wound was severe, the extensive hemorrhage prevented fever, and ultimately saved my life. The dietary was also favourable. Bread and water—and that in quantity not superabundant—effected a perfect cure.

“When I remonstrated against the restraint imposed upon me, and demanded to know on what grounds I was placed under restraint, I received, according to my keeper's mood, a savage answer or a sneer.

“ ‘Why should *I* be here?’ I demanded;
‘*I am not mad.*’

“ ‘Patience,’ replied my comforter; ‘one year more, and you shall have no cause to make that complaint, my friend.’

“In ten days I was able to quit my pallet, and sit beside the grated window. It was but a dreary prospect on which it looked—a dull, deserted garden, with high walls,

grass-grown walks, unclipped hedges, and every appearance that indicated former elegance and latter neglect. Closely imprisoned, a brutal wretch my gaoler, my spirits sank, my mind became morbid, and no doubt I should have gone into gloomy madness, had I endured the miserable probation the keeper hinted at. We are the mere creatures of circumstances, and accident preserved reason, and probably continued life.

“ Whatever might have been the general arrangements of the establishment, it would seem that the desolate garden my window overlooked was forbidden ground to the inmates of the prison-house. During three long and dreary evenings, while I gazed from the grating of my cell, no living thing appeared to disturb my melancholy musings. The singular story of my life was recalled to memory—its leading incidents passed ‘in shadowy review,’ and the last fatal scene rose to the mind’s eye, while wild ambition and wilder love were sadly contrasted with pre-

sent sufferings, embittered by the conviction that death alone should end them. Hours passed—the last visit of the keeper had been made—and still I gazed in listless misery from the window. I sighed—it was answered. Was it fancy? The night was bright and starry, and I pressed my face against the iron bars, to gain a more extended view of the deserted garden. A minute passed—alas! it was a delusion—and the sigh an echo of my own. No living thing was near. Hush! 'tis a movement underneath—a foot treads softly on the gravel—a human figure issues into the stream of starlight which is flung across the parterre below. By Heaven!—a woman! Ah! shall I ever forget that night I saw thee first, poor Mary!

“Stop!” I exclaimed to the outcast. “Allow me to imitate your example, and drown some delicate reminiscences connected with that name in brandy. Go on, my friend—I am better prepared for mischief now; and

faith ! it's generally at hand when a lady with that appellative figures in."

The wanderer gave a melancholy smile, and thus proceeded.

CHAPTER X.

LIFE IN A MADHOUSE.

Let's see for means :—O mischief! thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men !

“ While still gazing through the grating of my window at the fair incognita, I heard a key turning in the door of the corridor that led to my cell, and the heavy foot of my gaoler came slowly down the passage. It was the first time that, after sunset, my solitary chamber had been visited ; and when he had removed the bolts, my surprise was not diminished by perceiving that my keeper was the bearer of a large portmanteau, which, at a look, I recognized to be a portion of the

luggage I had left behind me, the night I was carried off from ——.

“ The fellow flung his burden on the floor, and eyed me with some suspicion.

“ ‘ Hallo !’ he exclaimed ; ‘ not to be yet ?’

“ ‘ What should I do in bed ?’ I returned, coldly. ‘ I am too miserable to sleep.’

“ ‘ On that point you are the best judge,’ said the keeper, drily ; ‘ for my part, in ten minutes I shall be fast as a watchman. But here are some traps belonging to you, and in future you may dress like a dandy, and you shall have the whole corridor to sport your figure in.’

“ ‘ Then my liberty—’

“ ‘ Will extend to the grated door at the end of the passage. But you don’t appear as grateful as I had expected you would have been for this extraordinary indulgence.’

“ ‘ Indulgence !’ I exclaimed. ‘ Why am I confined at all ? By Heaven ! when I regain my freedom, you, and all who have so

villanously deprived me of liberty shall suffer for it.'

" 'No doubt we shall, when—' the fellow paused—'ay, *when* you regain your freedom. Would you wish to ascertain exactly *when* that event shall happen?'

" I nodded an assent.

" 'My failing is being too tender-hearted, and I cannot keep people in suspense,' returned the scoundrel, with demoniac coldness. 'You entered this corridor insensible, and in a chair—you shall leave it in the same state, but with a slight alteration in the mode of carriage—the chair shall be exchanged for—'

" The villain paused—

" 'Go on, fellow.'

" 'A coffin!' he added, in a low muttering voice, that made every drop of blood recede in terror to the heart.

" 'Then, *am I to be murdered?*'

" 'Why, no—murder is an ugly phrase. No, no—were that the case, I need not have

been at the trouble of dragging this trunk of yours up stairs. One might suppose that you had dropped into a gaol, instead of a humane establishment, where every delicate attention is lavished on you. In this house, we kindly take care of people who, like yourself, want wit enough to do it for themselves. Now and again, from other parts of the place, we return our patients to the world — but you are honoured with what we call the state apartment — and I never knew any occupant leave it but with life.'

“ ‘Cold-blooded murderer!’ I exclaimed.
‘I will escape or perish.’

“The scoundrel grinned.

“ ‘Oh no,’ he continued, ‘surely you cannot be tired of such disinterested hospitality as you receive from us?—but some people never estimate a comfortable home. It is quiet—a little secluded, I admit—but then no one will trouble you here for rent or taxes—and still you would escape? Well, I will point the means out.’

‘ I wish to God you would !’ I ejaculated, passionately.

“ ‘ Oh, I am always too happy to oblige :’ and the villain smiled. ‘ The mode is simple ; you see that iron holdfast ?’

“ I looked in the direction to which the fellow pointed, and close to the ceiling observed a huge nail driven in the wall.

“ ‘ The cord which secures your trunk may be turned to some advantage. You need not fear the bolt—it has been tested before, and bore a heavier burden. And now, farewell !—the door remains unlocked, and the whole corridor is open to you. Should that extent of liberty be insufficient, you can enlarge it at discretion.’

“ And looking carelessly from the nail to the cord, the ruffian took up his lamp, quitted the room, and went whistling down the passage—I heard him secure the door at its extremity with bolt and chain, and next moment I was left in hopeless solitude.

“ For a considerable time I remained in a

state of stupid astonishment. I was incarcerated for life, that was certain—I should not be absolutely assassinated—they would only drive me to commit suicide, and supply me with the means. I looked at the cord upon the portmanteau—I looked at the bolt in the wall—it had been tested—it had borne a heavier weight—I was in a death-room—worse than a den of murder—for here the victim was obliged to be his own executioner. Great God! from that iron bar, wretches, driven to despair, had resorted to unholy means to free themselves from never-ending misery. In fancy, I saw the suicides suspended—the tortuous movements of parting life were before me—I saw the countenance blacken, and every limb convulse—at last the struggle ended—a breathless body rested against the wall—the keeper entered—looked on the dead man with a fiendish smile—and retired to announce to his employer, that to the shrine of murder another victim had been offered.

“This waking dream soon passed ; and into another course my thoughts were happily directed. My days were numbered—my death foredoomed—the grave was gaping for me—the end inevitable—but, by Heaven ! mine own should never be the agency by which it should be effected. I should die—but in death, I would drag others with me to the tomb.

“ When daylight came, I removed the cord and opened my portmanteau. It had been packed by my own hand—and, for the intended elopement, every conveniency necessary during a limited period had been collected. The trunk, to all appearance, had not been since disturbed—and a joyous thought flashed on my mind. Could it be possible ? I hastily threw clothing and linen on the floor—and at the bottom, where I had myself concealed them, there lay a purse of gold and a brace of loaded pistols.

“ The mariner who drifts over the boundless extent of ocean on a plank, views not

the vessel bounding before the breeze to his deliverance with livelier joy than that with which my eyes brightened. I examined the weapons carefully—and on their efficiency a kingdom might be risked. To guard against discovery, I hid them and the money in the mattress, replaced the other articles in the portmanteau, and then strolled up and down the corridor, until the keeper entered it, carrying my scanty breakfast.

“‘I have been rowed,’ he said, ‘for bringing you that trunk before it underwent examination. Damn the stupid fool below!—it was his business, not mine. Come, where’s the keys I gave you? Let’s have a search.’

“I pretended dissatisfaction.

“‘No grumbling,’ exclaimed the ruffian, harshly.

“With apparent ill-will I complied, and, one after the other, every article was searched minutely. Nothing to create apprehension was discovered—and the keeper retired, and left me to myself.

"Imagine the exultation that I felt, to think that, acting by a providential impulse, I had saved from discovery the means which hope whispered had been destined to achieve my deliverance. Not a feeling of despondency now remained. My heart was up, my spirits buoyant, every nerve was strung anew, and I panted for the hour of action.

"I strolled into the corridor. Beside my own, it contained three deserted rooms, each with a latticed window looking into the neglected garden. From the central chamber the iron bars had been removed, and a wall-flower, with a few dead plants, stood in the sill, and showed that not long since the desolate chamber had been tenanted. A female was, probably, the occupant—for the walls and woodwork were covered with pencillings of fruit and flowers, roughly but ably executed. Many sentences, in small and beautiful characters, were loosely interspersed among these drawings—and all expressive of a mind whose intellect had been totally over-

turned. While still gazing at these melancholy records of fixed insanity, the keeper entered the corridor.

“ ‘So,’ he said, ‘you have found your way to a fair one’s chamber, who, just a month ago, exchanged it for another.’

“ ‘Poor thing ! I trust she is convalescent.’

“ ‘She never complains, at all events,’ replied the ruffian. ‘She was noisy enough at times, but she is quiet now.’

“ ‘You have removed her, I hope, to another department of the building, preparatory to restoring her to society once more.’

“ ‘I have already told you, my good friend, that from these chambers there is but one exchange. Look,’ he said, pointing with his finger to a clump of evergreens, ‘what see you beyond those bushes?’

“ ‘Four or five small hillocks,’ I replied

“ ‘They are graves ; and for that upon the right, the lady you take such interest in exchanged this apartment.’

“ ‘Merciful Heaven ! dead !’

“ ‘ Ay, dead enough ; and, but for her own folly, she might have been alive and merry.’

“ ‘ Explain your meaning.’

“ ‘ A few words will do that,’ returned the keeper. ‘ She was extremely pretty, and her father extremely poor. An old gentleman who had returned from the East with countless wealth fancied the girl, and would have married her, and she, the fool, refused: She was in love, forsooth!—in love with the curate of the parish—rejected wealth, and preferred starvation. Her father determined otherwise—and, after remonstrance and argument had failed, he thought that medical treatment, and a little wholesome restraint, might bring her to her senses. Our governor was sent for—a sporting fee was given—he examined the lady, and, of course, pronounced her mad. Hither she was removed ; and—the thing is so funny I cannot but laugh’—and the monster grinned, ‘ within a month she was actually as mad as any one could wish her. I have been here three-and-twenty

years next Christmas, and I never witnessed anything so furious as she became at times. Her screams rang through the building, and were even heard beyond the walls; and, therefore, to prevent exciting attention out of doors, we were obliged to remove her here. Well, her insanity became confirmed, and under the violence of the disease her strength sank rapidly. At times she had an interval of mental repose when nature had become exhausted — and then she sketched those drawings on the walls, or talked for hours to that wallflower, which she had persuaded herself was her lover in disguise. She died; I came in just as life departed—and, would you believe it?—the last words that passed her lips was a blessing on the curate.'

"While the cold-blooded scoundrel was making his hellish revelation, I had with difficulty restrained myself; but when he described the death-bed of the ill-fated girl, I lost all self-control.

"'Infamous villain!' I exclaimed; 'mur-

derer is too mild a term to describe a monster by. I have read terrible accounts of monkish barbarity—heard of the horrors of the Bastile, and the atrocities of the Inquisition—but the infernal cruelties inflicted on the inmates of an English madhouse surpass them all. And thou, for twenty years, to witness them and live! Go out upon the world, beg upon the highway, dig in the mines, earn a crust any way; rob, murder, but—'

“ ‘ Ha! ha! a fine harangue, and goodly advice, too. Go out upon the world, marry. 'Tis easy said. No, no; I am better where I am—inasmuch as I am not particularly certain what reception I might find outside these walls—’

“ ‘ Into which, doubtless, some foul deed has forced you.’

“ ‘ Well,’ said the scoundrel, coolly, ‘ the guess is not amiss. The bolt struck the mark, although a fool shot it. It would appear that I have excited a little interest, and I will give you some private reasons for pre-

ferring retirement to society. Of course the communication is confidential—and *when you get out*—I hope you won't abuse it.'

"The marked emphasis the villain laid upon his words did not escape me. I, too, was doomed to die, and fill a secret grave beside the murdered beauty.

CHAPTER XI.

CONFESSIONS OF A KEEPER.

Romeo.—I do remember an apothecary—
And hereabouts he dwells.

* * * *

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ I was bred an apothecary, and had just completed my apprenticeship when my master died. He left behind him some money and a widow—and the latter, determining to carry on the business, retained me to conduct it. Mrs. Norton was old enough to be my mother, but as she did not consider me too young to be her husband, she lost no time in letting me know her opinion on that subject. She had a house, business, and a thousand pounds, while I was the owner of a silver watch and a

case of lancets. Well, perceiving that she was over head and ears in love, to prevent her dying of a broken heart, I married her. The wedding was rather precipitate, as the old chemist was but six weeks buried; and it seemed that the neighbours thought as much; for, by general consent, they abandoned the shop, and left us ample time to bill and coo at leisure. Our honeymoon was short; I had obtained beauty wholesale—and shortly fancied that a wife of half the age and size would suit me better. I began to prefer the parlour of the Greyhound to my own—and my stout spouse resorted for comfort in my absence to the brandy bottle. The course we both pursued was not calculated to remove the prejudice against us, occasioned by what the villagers called the indecency of our marriage. Not a soul would allow me to drench or blister him—a rival chemist opened a shop—and, in a short time, as a necessary consequence, closed mine.

“No ass on earth is comparable to a love-sick widow—and, on the evening I had made her mine, the amorous relict of the defunct doctor transferred to me his cash-box, containing the savings of forty years’ physicking the country for miles around. Within a twelvemonth the contents had marvellously disappeared—the parlour of the Greyhound, the cockpit in the rear, and a race-course in the neighbourhood, having pretty equally divided the chemist’s cash. As I put the last five guineas in my pocket, I began to think it time to look about me. I had nothing left but a house I seldom inhabited, a shop that no one entered, and a wife who would outweigh every woman in the parish by a stone.

“I must acquaint you with a circumstance, that certainly did not render my matrimonial relations more comfortable. The prettiest girl in the parish was Susan Gray, the miller’s daughter, and with Susan I was desperately in love. I lavished presents upon her—she

received them—and, as I discovered afterwards, laughed at me for my folly. If I talked to her of love, she reminded me that I had a wife; and, when I praised her beauty, she told me that I had a cart-load of it at home. Had I been unmarried, she led me to believe, I should not have sighed in vain; and, I may confess the truth at once—I secretly wished that my wife was with her former husband, the departed doctor.

“ One evening I returned home, and, more enamoured with the miller’s daughter than ever, although she had peremptorily declared her aversion to listen to the addresses of a married man, I found that my fat helpmate was indisposed, as she generally was, after an overdose of brandy. She asked for a simple medicine—I made a slight mistake between bottles—administered oxalic acid instead of ether—and, in half an hour, I was informed at the Greyhound that the draught had effected a radical cure, and that my wife was dead. The world is a malicious one—people said I

had poisoned her, and a stupid jury called accident 'Wilful Murder.' I was imprisoned, arraigned, and tried. A crotchety judge discovered a point which favoured my escape—one juryman agreed in the same opinion—and I was acquitted. I returned to my house; but every face was averted from me with abhorrence. I wrote to Susan, told her I was single now, and offered her my hand. She flung the letter in the bearer's face, and told him that if ever I dared to approach the house, she would have me ducked in her father's mill-pond. The women hooted me, and called me *Bluebeard*—the boys broke my windows—and on the following market-day, I was hanged in effigy in the square, and burnt in front of my own house afterwards.

"I was sitting in my deserted parlour, holding the last guinea I possessed in my hand, and wondering, when it was gone, where I was to get another. Next morning I was to give up possession of my house, which I had

been obliged to dispose of to defray the expenses of my trial; and, between ourselves, bribe the jurymen through whose means I had escaped the gallows. Some one knocked at the street door, and I went up stairs to reconnoitre from the window—for popular detestation against me was so great, that I apprehended personal violence. A man was standing without, wrapped in a riding-coat closely buttoned — and, after some hesitation, I mustered courage, lighted a candle, and let him in.

“ The visiter and I were totally unknown to each other; but, when he had inquired my name, he threw off his coat, took a chair, and signed that I should follow the example. I sat down, and the stranger opened the conversation.

“ ‘ You were tried at the last assizes, I believe, for murder; and, if I have been rightly informed, had a narrow escape.’

“ It was a very uncereemonious commencement, and I returned a surly answer.

“ ‘ You are *the* man, however, who was tried ?’

“ ‘ I am.’

“ ‘ Then you are the person I am wanting. I am here on business, and therefore will come to the point at once. I presume the late affair has not increased your practice ?’

“ ‘ It has ruined it altogether,’ I replied ; although, had I told the truth, the cockpit and race-course had done that effectually before the trial.

“ ‘ Then I suppose a valuable patient would not solicit your assistance and advice in vain ?’

“ ‘ I should say not,’ I answered.

“ ‘ Do you know Kelburn Park ?’ inquired the stranger, ‘ and aught of its proprietor ?’

“ ‘ I have merely heard of the place, but know nothing of its inhabitants.’

“ ‘ Come there to-morrow evening. Inquire for Captain—— ;’ and he handed me his card : ‘ and, hark ye ! take another name, for your own has, on a late occasion, not risen in public estimation.’

“ ‘For what am I wanted?’ I demanded.

“ ‘That question will be answered in proper time,’ returned the stranger, haughtily. Then, pulling a purse from his pocket, he reckoned twenty pieces, and handed me the gold. ‘This,’ he continued, ‘is your retaining fee. Be useful, and it shall be made a hundred when you have completed the expected cure.’

“ ‘Twenty guineas!’ I muttered, looking from the stranger to the gold.

“ ‘Be punctual, and I shall be ready to receive you.’

“ He resumed his riding-coat, and buttoned it so closely, that his features were effectually concealed. We settled on the fictitious name I should assume, and the stranger took his departure, leaving me richer by twenty guineas, and overwhelmed with curiosity and surprise.

“ What could the unknown want with me? What were the services required from a reputed murderer? He had sought me with no honest intent, that was pretty certain. Well,

no matter—whatever the business was, than me he could find no better agent to effect it.

“ The place he desired me to repair to on the following evening was distant some twenty miles, and it was nearly twilight when I reached a village beside the park. I entered the inn, seated myself in the parlour, called for refreshment, and entered into conversation with a man who was discussing a horn of ale. He proved to be the village barber—and, like all of his trade, as communicative as need be wished. I learned from him that the owner of the mansion whither I was going was a gentleman of large estate, of sottish habits, and secluded disposition. Nothing could be duller than his mode of life; and, if rumour was correct, nothing less happy than his domestic relations. His lady was young enough to be his daughter—and to great personal attractions united an ardent taste for pleasure, and a temper impatient of restraint. It was said that this ill-assorted

union had produced the fruits that might have been expected—his sottish habits were confirmed, and her former indifference turned into hatred and disgust.

“ ‘The squire,’ continued the barber, ‘has a step-brother twenty years younger than himself. He has returned six months ago from the Indies, and, since he has resided at the hall, things have gone smoother. He pays great attention to the lady, and his civility compensates his brother’s neglect. No relations can be more affectionate—people do say—but, lord ! it’s all scandal—and the captain’s is only brotherly civility, after all.’

“ When I paid the reckoning and set out for Kelburn Park, I reflected on the barber’s information. No doubt the unknown visiter was the younger brother of the squire, and a hundred nameless suspicions crossed my mind. When admitted into the domain, I found a man waiting to conduct me to the house—and, leaving the great avenue, he led me by a private path to a postern, opened the door,

showed me to a parlour, lighted candles, and retired, telling me that his master in a few minutes would join me.

“That promise was realized; and the stranger with whom I had conversed the preceding evening entered the room. A hurried greeting passed. He closed the door, drew a chair, and immediately proceeded to business.

“‘You are punctual—’tis well,’ he said.

“‘Professional men are generally so,’ I replied.

“‘I promised you last night a patient—treat him skilfully, and he’ll prove to a country apothecary worth all the clodhoppers in the Riding.’

“‘Possibly his may be a secret disease—a malady not to be detected—and, consequently, may baffle my humble skill.’

“‘No, no, my friend. In a day or two I will undertake that you shall understand the case and treatment perfectly. Attend to what I say. In the West Indies I was

attacked with malignant fever, and an hospital assistant of the same name you have assumed watched me with unremitting care, and plucked me from the jaws of death. With that name my brother is familiar, and I have told him that I expected my preserver on a visit. No suspicion will arise. Personate that man—and, as I owe my life to one doctor, and expect much from another, I add ten guineas to his fee.'

“ He placed the money in my hand—gave some general directions for my conduct—and, when he thought me perfect in the part I was to act, conducted me down stairs, and introduced me to the lord and lady of the mansion. No doubt he had prepared the parties for the visit—for the squire received me as an expected guest, and the lady welcomed me with a most gracious smile. The barber's gossip at the inn had already given me a key to the secret history of the establishment—and before I retired for the night, I had observed enough

to show in what relative positions the inmates of the hall were placed.

“ The squire was a man of fifty, with an unmeaning expression of face, and a frame of unusual strength. He was a sensualist of that low degree, who slumbers life away in never-ending inebriety. I never saw him absolutely drunk, nor could I say that he was ever altogether sober. From the time he rose until he retired for the night, the tankard was ever at his elbow—and in sleeping and drinking, day after day was consumed. He seemed born for no purpose—nor had he a care beyond that regarding the quality of the liquors he indulged in. Nature had given him a herculean constitution—drunkards are occasionally long-lived—and so little impression had sensual indulgence and sedentary habits made on the lord of Kelburn Park, that he bade fair to reach that extreme range of existence, which men of more temperate habits seldom arrive at.

“His lady had not reached her thirtieth year, and to features of beautiful regularity united a faultless figure. The animation of her dark and brilliant eyes formed a striking contrast to the dull, unintellectual heaviness of the countenance of her liege lord. At first sight, there was nothing in the fair one's air or manner that would not have commanded the gazer's admiration—but a closer inspection was unfavourable. There was pride upon the lip, and haughty impatience on the brow—while the whole expression of a face for which nature had done her all, was passionate impulse too violent to be controlled, and freely permitted to run riot.

“My descriptive notices of the inmates of Kelburn Park shall close with my patron, the captain. In the prime of manly vigour, he had every advantage that a fashionable exterior and military air combine. Although his features were regular, and his figure soldierly, his haughty manner took from the favourable impression they would have secured.

He might exact obedience, but never command affection or respect. You may generally form a correct estimate of men's dispositions from the feelings they elicit from inferiors—and, in a very few days, I saw that the domestics of the hall regarded their besotted master with mixed sentiments of pity and contempt, while the captain was at the same time flattered, feared, and detested.

“When I retired for the night, and reflected on my singular introduction to Kelburn Park, I felt convinced that some dark deed was contemplated. I had watched the lady and the captain, and it was quite evident that a criminal attachment existed between these guilty relations. Indeed, they took no pains to conceal their mutual passion. Even in the presence of the unfortunate husband, glances passed, and blandishments were interchanged; while, at other times, so little did they study appearances, that it seemed that by both every prudential consideration was abandoned.

“On the third evening after I was domi-

ciled at the Park, the captain followed me after supper to the apartment I had occupied ; and although we had drunk wine freely, his servant opened another bottle, and left us *tête-à-tête*. We filled, and drank a glass or two. I saw that whatever the agency was which the captain expected from me, it was now about to be disclosed—and a few minutes proved that I was right in that conjecture.

“ ‘ Davis,’ he said, calling me by the name I had assumed, ‘ I think I have seen enough in your character to warrant my reposing unlimited confidence in your secresy and discretion. The world has gone hard with both of us. *You* have been hunted from society like a rabid animal, and *I* been crossed alike in love and in ambition. Because I came later than my brutal brother into existence, that existence has been rendered miserable ; and while he drones life away in stupid debauchery, I, with talent and spirit to take a bold position among my fellow-men, have not the means to open the path to fortune, but hang

upon the bounty of a drunken sensualist, for the paltry income which enables me to hold the station of a private gentleman, to which birth and profession have entitled me. Would you do aught to better your condition, and win the lasting gratitude of those, whose powerful aid might help you to independence?"

"I looked at him with distrust, and feared the coming declaration.

" 'Speak,' he continued; 'I have put a question plainly, and I require that it shall be as plainly answered.'

" 'When I know the service you require, I will then be the better enabled to reply.'

"The silence of a minute followed. The captain hesitated. I saw a passing struggle. Caution and reckless determination were opposed. The latter triumphed, and my patron thus addressed me :

" 'So—I must disclose my purpose, and leave nothing to be guessed at! Well, be it so; and yet for one saved by a mere quibble

from the rope a month ago, you seem marvellously disinclined to venture new experiments. Come, *I will speak out*, and, I have little doubt, speak also to sufficient purpose. You have been accused of murder. Your victim, by every sacrifice, had earned your gratitude. *You drugged her*—pshaw!—nonsense!—eleven out of twelve men declared it upon oath. There is a stranger—useless to the community, and obnoxious to the happiness of others—one whose removal would be of no more consequence to mankind than the rooting out of a withered tree—and yet that useless existence of a mass of worthlessness has made two beings wretched.'

"He paused. Our eyes were bent upon each other, and another minute passed.

"'Am I to speak all?' he muttered, and filled the glass again. 'Well, no partial confidence shall be yours; the veil shall be lifted, and in a double trust I shall repose—moral abasement and self-advantage. Did you betray me—none would believe you. Men

shun you as a monster — and there's not a hind who would not refuse a cup of water to the murderer of a too confiding woman. To *me* your crimes and necessities are full security—and now attend to me. . At supper you sate at table with three companions. To achieve the happiness of *two*, the *third* must be removed. Read you the riddle yet?

“ ‘I cannot affect to misunderstand your meaning; but why accuse me of a crime of which I have been declared guiltless? If I have made one unfortunate mistake—’

“ ‘You should have the less objection to commit *another*. Listen to my proposal, and decline it if you please.’

“ ‘I need not trouble you with anything but the result of half an hour's conversation. The captain and I understood each other perfectly. The removal of his brother was determined, and I agreed to—’

“ ‘Murder him!’ I ejaculated, with a shudder.

“ ‘Oh no,’ returned the scoundrel, coldly,

‘I only consented to supply the means. In plain English, engaged to *prepare* the medicine—and the captain undertook to *administer* it.’—

“ ‘ Good God ! and poison his unsuspecting brother ? ’

“ The keeper gave an assenting nod.

“ Well, I have not time for longer gossip, and I shall briefly conclude the story. The object of our operations was to avoid suspicion, and by slow but certain means sap life’s foundation, and make the removal of the victim appear to be merely the result of natural decay. For a time the work proceeded well ; daily my patient became worse ; and it was bruited about the neighbourhood by ourselves that the squire was killing himself by intemperance. As the doomed one evinced evident symptoms of fast approaching death, his guilty wife and her more guilty paramour discarded the semblance of propriety altogether, and openly indulged in familiarities which even the dissolute would

endeavour to conceal. The declining health of the husband, and the profligacy of the wife, at last reached the ear of a kinsman—and we heard, with considerable apprehension, that he was about to visit Kelburn Park, and, what we dreaded more, bring an experienced physician with him. A secret consultation took place. I urged postponement—but the captain and the lady overruled the objections that I made—the death of the patient was decided—and, in a few mornings afterwards, the tenantry were apprised that their landlord had been found dead in bed, from apoplexy, produced by intoxication.

“Even the rash precipitancy with which death had been effected might probably have escaped detection, had there not been an indecent and unusual haste in committing the corpse of the unhappy man to the grave to which he had been foully hurried. The funeral took place by torchlight on the second evening, and none of the gentry in the

vicinity of the park were invited to be present. Whisperings, and doubts, and shakings of men's heads were succeeded by a burst of public indignation. Encouraged by this popular display of disgust, the inmates of the hall made revelations which led the world to believe that one foul crime had been followed by another—and that adultery had paved the way to murder. We were arrested. The body of the dead man was exhumed, and ample evidence of the cause of his untimely decease established. The result is told in a few words: a link in the chain of evidence was wanted—and *I supplied it*—”

“ ‘ You became approver ! ’ I exclaimed.

“ ‘ A shrewd guess,’ said the ruffian—‘ and brought the captain to the gallows, but the lady managed to escape. And now, sir, when you counsel me to return to the world, will you undertake to guarantee me a gracious reception ? But, hark ! that bell tells that I am wanted—at supper hour you will see me again. Observe, that I trust you with an

open window, and you can easily escape, could you but surmount—some fifty feet of solid masonry without.'

"He said — hurried down the corridor — bolted the door by which he retreated, and left me to myself.

"When the sound of his retiring footsteps died away in the distant passages of the building, I felt as if relieved from the malignant influence of a demon in the shape of man. I had been listening to the confessions of a wretch who had done to death the very being whom, at the altar of his God, he had sworn to cherish and protect; and, at the bidding of the adulterer, removed an unsuspecting husband. Crime has its gradations, and of all the guilty the poisoner is the worst. And my life was hanging on a thread — the will of a wretch like this — a double murderer. What was to be done? — and how was I to effect my deliverance? It is true, I had the means of ridding the world of a monster, and there was a chance of escape

afterwards. Alas ! that chance was all but desperate—for, unacquainted with the building, how could I hope to gain an outlet, after the report of firearms had alarmed the scoundrels who were no doubt ever on the alert? I thought coolly for a moment. Open violence was not calculated to succeed, and I must meet villany with cunning ; and, while my spirit was buoyant with the prospect of ultimate success, I would mask my design more effectually by assuming, in my bearing towards the keeper, a semblance of hopeless despondency.

“ For several days I maintained a moody silence — listened with indifference to the gaoler’s remarks—and scarcely spoke to him in return. I thought that the scoundrel observed my increasing melancholy, as he believed it, with satisfaction ; and, by a steady perseverance in deception, I succeeded to the fullness of my hopes. In a week he looked upon me as a despairing wretch, who was only anxious to wear a miserable existence

away, without sufficient energy to even contemplate any exertion to achieve his own deliverance. Even the most artful villains may be overreached at times, and I lulled my keeper into a false security. I affixed the cord that bound my trunk, with a noose and slip-knot, to the iron bar the scoundrel had pointed out—and, as if I had forgotten to remove it, permitted him to discover what he believed to be deliberate preparations for committing self-destruction.

“When he entered my cell that evening I pretended to be sleeping. He left my supper on the table, observed me with a careless glance, and, as he walked down the passage, muttered to himself, ‘Another week or two, and the Earl will receive some welcome intelligence, and I the promised reward.’

“‘Upon my soul!’ I returned, in an undertone, ‘you were never more mistaken in your life, my honest friend! but, hit or miss, the Earl shall have intelligence within the allotted fortnight.’

“How strangely is the human mind constructed! *I*, in a madhouse—*I*, in a room in which some moody wretch had ended life and misery—*I*, hopelessly situated as any of the victims who had preceded me, laughed at the cord and iron, and looked forward to a scene of bloodshed with as much indifference as if it were an ordinary event in every day existence.

“The night was bright and starry, and I continued standing at the open window which looked upon the deserted garden. It was a dreary and heart-sinking prospect, for the graves my scoundrel keeper had pointed to lay just below. *I* was to fill *the next*. I laughed—it was a bitter laugh—for I felt a full conviction that my intended murderer should precede me to the tomb.

“While I gazed vacantly from the window, the moon, escaping from a cloud-bank which had hitherto concealed her, rose suddenly. The stream of light was startling, and every shrub and object visible in broad day were

now revealed distinctly. The soft moonbeams fell upon the graves—I reckoned them. ‘So,’ I muttered to myself, ‘four victims—and a fifth wanting, too—and I have been selected. Well, if I be fated to fill a secret grave, at least it shall be a bloody one. How soundly sleep the dead! The ravings of despair—the furious outbursts of insanity—all hushed and quiet.’

“I stood with folded arms, still musing on the scene I looked on, and idly conjecturing who might be the tenants of these nameless tombs, and under what circumstances each spirit had quitted its tenement of clay. In the profound stillness of the night, the rustling of a falling leaf will strike the ear—I heard a movement among the shrubs—and a figure, which seemed to have risen from the earth, stood in the centre of the grassy mounds, motionless as a statue! Had the dead risen? was that form living clay or a disembodied spirit? My heart beat fast—I held my breath in terror and surprise—when

suddenly the figure glided from the spot it occupied, approached the window where I stood, and sat down on a rustic bench beneath it. Before a minute passed, I ascertained that the midnight visiter was no 'spirit from another world'—for a sigh so deep and melancholy, as that which only escapes from bosoms overloaded with hopeless sorrow, reached my ear—and a furtive glance from the open casement assured me that the distressed one was—a woman.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OUTCAST'S CONFESSIONS—MIDNIGHT IN A MADHOUSE.

Aust. Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs.

King John. Dost thou understand me?
Thou art his keeper.

Hubert. And I will keep him so,
That he shall not offend your majesty.

King John. Death.

Hubert. My lord?

King John. A grave.

Hubert. He shall not live.

King John. Enough.

“ I remained for several minutes silent and indecisive, while the unknown was quite unconscious that any human thing was near. Occasionally I heard low mutterings, but the words were indistinct, while long and heavy sighs told that the bosom they escaped from was painfully oppressed with secret grief. I felt

more than ordinary curiosity to penetrate the mystery in which the midnight incognita was wrapped, but feared that any effort to announce my proximity might seem a trespass on sorrows which, perhaps, admitted of no alleviation. While I listened to every breathing which passed her lips, one sentence fell upon my ear, and the words uttered by the fair speaker appeared intended to remove my doubts.

“ ‘Can Heaven have willed that such villany as his shall go unpunished—and that I shall moulder in a secret grave, my sufferings and wrongs unknown and unavenged?’

“I plucked the faded wallflower—and, light as the noise its fall occasioned when it dropped at the mourner's feet, it startled her. She sprang from the bench on which she had been seated, looked round suspiciously, and then made a movement from the spot. I took an instant resolution, and, in a low voice, muttered,

“ ‘Fear nothing, lady.’

“ ‘Ha!’ returned the unknown; ‘a man’s voice. Who are you?’

“ ‘One as wretched as yourself,’ I softly answered.

“ ‘Are you not an official of this abominable mansion?’

“ ‘No, lady! I am one of its unhappy inmates—a man whose hope of deliverance is desperate.’

“ ‘You are unwillingly detained, then?’

“ ‘I am.’

“ ‘And with no immediate prospect of escape?’

“ ‘Yes, lady, one has been left open for me.’

“ ‘Then are you happier than I. What may that be, sir?’

“ ‘The grave,’ I answered.

“ ‘Our fates are similar,’ she replied, ‘and when my deliverance comes it shall be welcomed. Life has no charms for me; I have outlived all that is valuable—for what is left me now? Blighted fame and ruined fortune; are these worth living for?’

“ ‘Would that I could do aught but pity you. Stranger though I am, I would risk life to achieve your deliverance, or, if that failed, avenge your wrongs.’

“ ‘Both, sir, I fear, are beyond mortal power,’ was the reply.

“ ‘Nay, lady, nothing is impossible. I have a strong arm and trusty weapons. It is true I am but a single man, but am I not a desperate one?’

“ ‘Hark! something moves. No—’tis but fancy—yet we might be overheard, and in that case—’ she made a pause.

“ ‘Speak, lady.’

“ ‘Violence and villany would be followed out by murder.’

“ ‘I know that *my* life hangs upon a hair; but *you*—savage as they are, they dare not injure a helpless woman.’

“ ‘Did you but know the secrets of a prison-house, as I do, you would have learned that in this accursed place sex and innocence command no respect, nor afford the slightest pro-

tection. And yet, I feel a rising hope assume the place of dark despondency, and this singular and accidental interview seems an intervention of Providence.'

"While she spoke a distant door shut heavily.

"'I dare not stay. Stranger, farewell. At the same hour to-morrow night, I will venture to the garden.'

"Next moment I saw her figure glide through the trees—and the rustling of fallen leaves when trodden on announced that she was gone, and that I once more was left in lonely misery.

"The scoundrel keeper surprised me by an early visit. I was sleeping when he entered, and his unexpected appearance at first gave me some alarm. Had my midnight adventure been discovered? We always fancy the worst, and I concluded that my conversation with the fair unknown had been overheard, and that a more stringent imprisonment awaited us.

“ ‘ You are afoot betimes, my friend.’

“ ‘ Friend !’ returned the scoundrel ; ‘ that is a convenient phrase, and generally applied either to a person one hates or one despises. It was ever the term by which my old patron the captain addressed me in Kelburn Park—and I believe that, at the very time, he would have drugged me as I had done the squire. Well, friend, as such must be the term, let’s have your keys, as I wish to peep once more into your portmanteau.’

“ ‘ You seem determined to make yourself intimately acquainted with its contents,’ I observed, as I complied with the order.

“ The fellow nodded, unclosed the trunk, and every article it contained underwent a rigid examination.

“ ‘ Nothing wrong ; this might be supposed a dangerous tool by some ;’ and the scoundrel took up a razor. ‘ But I shall indulge you with every luxury ; and as I have left you a rope, I may entrust you with a razor. At your leisure, you may amuse yourself by re-

placing your traps,' and he flung the key upon the bed, leaving the floor littered with my personal property, which had been very unceremoniously extracted from their depository.

" 'I seldom take trouble a second time,' continued the poisoner, ' but the governor is always harping on my giving you this trunk unsearched. We had a row last night—a gentleman, who, like yourself, required temporary retirement and medical advice, contrived, Heaven knows how, to conceal a knife—and...'

" 'Committed suicide,' I exclaimed.

" 'Lord, not at all, responded the villain; 'we might have overlooked that; 'twould have been only taking a personal liberty with himself. No, faith! the fool fancied he might escape—made a rush from his cell, and stabbed a couple of our people before he received a cracked skull from me. He'll give us no further trouble.'

" 'And did you murder the unhappy

wretch for merely attempting to regain his freedom?"

" 'I wish you would drop that phrase of murder—it sounds so oddly. I'll bring you breakfast presently. In with your traps again, and that will afford you occupation for the morning.'

" Of all the cold-blooded and sarcastic scoundrels I had ever read of, or fancied could exist, the poisoner was the most superlative. If ever a tiger's heart lurked in human form, it did in his. To increase the agony of despair—rouse 'moody madness' into frenzy—add mockery to suffering—these seemed the only objects for which the villain clung to infamous existence. From close associations, the natural dispositions of men undergo an involuntary change, and catch an impulse foreign to earlier feeling. I felt it in myself. He who was to have been my murderer, I was assured would prove himself the victim; and the second abortive search he made to discover

whether I had aught to make me dangerous, brought with it a fixed conviction, that I had been predestined to rid the world of a monster. Waking and sleeping, the villain engrossed my thoughts—his death their leading object. He was ordained to perish—and I to be his executioner.

“On wore the day—and long and heavily it passed. The evening meal was brought—and the keeper, after his customary manner, secured the doors and left me.

“When alone, I examined the garden attentively, for it was my determination to seek a closer interview with the fair unknown than that of the preceding evening. I found that the means of descent were not difficult. An old fruit-tree, nailed against the wall beneath the window, would, with the assistance of the nail and cord left me by my worthy keeper, permit me to reach the bench below, and re-ascend at pleasure. My simple preparations were speedily completed—and

I waited, with no small impatience, for the promised interview with the mysterious fair one.

“Every sound was hushed—and two or three lights, which from a distance had twinkled through the trees, gradually disappeared. To guard against surprise, I hid the pistols in my bosom—and, having ascertained that the cord was securely fixed, made my descent in safety to the garden, and sate down upon the bench to await the coming of the fair incognita.

“In a few minutes a soft footstep was heard, approaching, and the figure I had seen twice before issued from the clump of evergreens. When she approached the bench, and I rose to receive her, she started back.

“‘How is this, sir? Total strangers to each other, are we warranted in meeting thus at midnight.’

“‘Lady,’ I said, ‘circumstances must stand in apology for lack of ceremony. We both are wretched. My object in seeking this

interview is only to ascertain whether I might become the humble instrument of saving you, and, probably, of effecting an escape myself.—In me you may therefore repose implicit confidence.—United by the bond of misery, if I cannot save, I can at least make the attempt—and even in this infernal den, render my name memorable to its ruffian inmates. Lady—dare you trust me?

“She turned her eyes on mine, and scanned my features for a moment with attention.

“‘*I will,*’ she pronounced emphatically, ‘and between woman’s wit and man’s determination, liberty may yet be won. Are we secure from interruption?’

“‘I think so. The keeper restricts his visits to the day.’

“‘As to me,’ continued the incognita, ‘I am regarded as morally dead—and too heart-sunken even to dream of leaving this place with life. But they little know me, nor dream that a spark of latent hope remained within this withered bosom—and though it smoul-

dered unperceived, the flame that kindles unexpectedly will not be the less dangerous. Would that the power were equal to the will ! and, woman though I am, I would attempt escape, no matter how desperate the chance, and reckless what the consequences might be that attended upon a failure.'

" ' Lady, has your imprisonment been long ?'

" ' Long—long—indeed,' she replied, with a deep sigh. ' Six years have rolled away, since I was stolen from the world and buried in this living tomb.'

" ' Was there a cause to warrant, or even afford a pretext for this outrage ?'

" ' Oh, yes, abundant cause—I was too deeply injured to remain at liberty. The villain had but one alternative—I must be disposed of—and the choice lay between a prison and a grave.'

" ' Would that I knew the story of your wrongs.'

" ' Wrongs !' she exclaimed. ' Mine are

worse than wrongs: Fancy that every injury that villain man inflicts upon a woman—that woman dependent on his will, and looking to him for protection. Beggared—deceived—dishonoured. Victim to his arts first—sacrificed to his safety afterwards. What is the story of my wrongs? Blighted love—ruined fortunes — blasted fame. Deprived of all worth living for—and, lastly, robbed of liberty itself. To that tale of wrongs could aught besides be added?”

“ ‘ And does the monster who has wrought such ruin live?’

“ ‘ Ay, and in splendid infamy. The villain occupies a lordly hall — the victim drags existence out in that worst of gaols—a madhouse.’

“ ‘ Name the wretch, lady.’

“ ‘ The Earl of ——,’ was the reply.

“ ‘ Good heavens ! Then are we both here by the same vile agency. I, too, have been sacrificed to that scoundrel’s hatred.’

“ ‘ What *you* ? Were you the companion

of Lord Edward ——? and employed to woo a proud fair-one for another, forgot your duty, and won her for yourself?’

“ ‘ I am that unfortunate offender.’

“ ‘ Know you what the lady’s fate was—know you what your own will be?’

“ ‘ For Lady Caroline I fear the worst—my doom I can guess readily—eternal imprisonment—unless the durance of my captivity shall be abridged by murder.’

“ ‘ Regarding your own fate your conjectures are correct—and I can acquaint you with the *dénouement* of the tragic scene, in which you were a prominent actor on the fearful night when Lady Caroline—’

“ ‘ Died by her father’s hand.’

“ ‘ No; death to her would have been a mercy — unhappily she lives — reason and beauty gone—’

“ ‘ Reason and beauty gone?’

“ ‘ Yes—and deprived of both by the author of her being. The erring bullet directed at you by the infuriated Earl found another

mark—it struck his daughter's face, shattered the jaw-bone, and inflicted a hideous scar. While recovering slowly from the injury, strict orders were given to her attendants that the ill-fated lady should never be permitted to use a looking-glass. For a time the order was obeyed—but, profiting by the momentary absence of the servant, Lady Caroline rushed into an adjoining chamber—one glance at the mirror was sufficient—a piercing shriek was heard—the attendants found her in convulsions on the carpet—she was removed to her own chamber—and when she recovered—reason had fled, and she is pronounced an incurable maniac!

“ Horror-struck by the frightful narration, I nearly fainted. A sudden alarm recalled me to myself—it was the sound of several voices, and apparently of men engaged in drunken revelry.

“ ‘ We must part instantly,’ said my companion, in a whisper; ‘ the villains are carousing—and there would be danger in re-

maining longer here. In drunken moments, they sometimes ramble through the building—and I believe for no purpose besides disturbing the wretched prisoners, and rousing them to a consciousness of the misery which they are doomed to undergo. To-morrow night we meet again—and then—we think of freedom. Farewell! be prudent—and desperate as our fates appear, some kinder fortune than we have met with yet may restore our liberty.'

"She offered me her hand; I raised it to my lips, whispered a good night, and while she disappeared behind the trees, I regained my chamber, undressed, threw myself upon the bed, and slept, dreaming of wild attempts at liberty, and conflicts with my caitiff gaolers.

"From these uneasy slumbers the opening of the door aroused me. Lights flashed upon my eyes—I looked up—three men were standing at my bedside, and in two I recognized the poisoner who regularly attended me, and

the Earl's valet, who had escorted me from his lord's mansion on the night when I was overpowered and wounded in the library. The third was a man of commanding appearance—taller and stouter than his companions—his figure was hidden in a riding-cloak, and his features concealed by a mask. The keeper, who seemed half-intoxicated, held down the lantern as I sat upright in the bed, and, flinging its light upon my face, sneeringly observed to his companion—

“ ‘ Friend Pierre—what think you of the patient? Have not change of air and a cool regimen improved him marvellously? He came here with a cracked skull. Well, we have patched that up—should he not be thankful for such kindness? But, would you credit it? the fellow grumbles, after all. There's ingratitude for you !’

“ ‘ Pshaw! I can't believe it,’ returned the valet; ‘ the gentleman's too happy, could he but make that discovery himself,’ and both the scoundrels grinned.

“ My blood boiled. I clutched the pistols unseen beneath the bed-coverings. Was the moment for vengeance come? Two lives were in my power—should the third escape, it would be only by a successful contest with a desperate man. Careless whether this should prove the hour of trial or not, I prepared for it with the dangerous calmness of despair; and the deadly struggle I expected was rather courted than evaded.

“ ‘ Cowardly villains!’ I exclaimed, ‘ I fling defiance at you both. What are ye? The lowest scoundrels in the scale of infamy—the agents of the murderer. That outcast wretch’—I pointed my finger contemptuously at the keeper—‘ a poisoner by trade—and thou’—my eyes rested on the valet—‘ the wretched agent of a still greater scoundrel—that caitiff lord, thy master!’

“ The unexpected boldness of my address was not lost upon the midnight visitors. The sallow cheeks of the Italian assumed the livid hue of death, as, closing his brows together,

he returned my look of disdain with a scowl indescribably malignant. The keeper, with undisturbed composure, replied with a fiendish grin; but the masked stranger appeared the most affected of the three. His limbs quivered with rage—and through the mask I heard his teeth grind convulsively.

“ ‘ Go back !’ I continued, ‘ slave of a villain master ! to your base employer. Tell him he has confined the body, but cannot break the spirit of his victim. Whisper in the monster’s ear that a day of retribution yet may come. Ask him to produce to the world a ruined ward. Bid him restore the beauty he has scathed—the reason he has unseated. Tell him, that from this cell I heap curses on his felon head—on him, worse than a murderer—the destroyer of his child !’

“ While fulminating this defiance, the keeper and the Italian looked at each other as if surprised at the boldness of a wretch, whom, no doubt, they had expected to find a subdued and drooping sufferer—one whose

hope and spirit were equally extinguished — but on the masked stranger the effect was astounding. At mention of the Earl's ward, his agitation was apparent, but the allusion to his ill-fated daughter produced a burst of rage beyond control. I heard a muttered 'Damnation !' and a click of a pistol-cock distinctly followed—but the valet flung himself between him and my bed—and in a low, hurried voice, exclaimed, 'Not by your hand, my lord. For God's sake, patience !' The menial's remonstrance was effective, and the tall stranger quitted the room, attended by the favourite minion of Lord ———.

"The keeper remained to secure the cell, and paused a moment in the doorway. For a moment he silently regarded me—and there was a quiet devilry in his look, altogether inexpressible.

" 'I thank you,' he said, 'for the flattering character you have given me. You describe me as an able druggist. Well, probably, lest I might forget the art, I shall keep

my hand in practice. A week or two will tell—and now to bed—sleep soundly—you shall not be disturbed again,' he said—shut the door to—walked slowly down the passage. I heard bolt and bar carefully turned, and once more was left to myself.

“ The footsteps of my gaoler had scarcely died away, when I was startled by a slight noise, as if sand was flung against the casement. Again and again, the sound was heard—and, springing from my bed, I hastened to the window. Beneath, the incognita was standing—and, to a hasty inquiry, she replied by desiring me to dress and descend instantly. A few minutes, and I was clothed, armed, and beside her in the garden.

“ Her look and manner were unusually excited. ‘ Listen,’ she whispered, ‘ and collect yourself. The crisis of our fate is come. This night decides the destiny of both—and success or failure will be attended with freedom or a grave. For either, sir, are you prepared?’

“ I pressed her hand with mine. ‘ Whether good or ill betide, lady, I am ready.’

“ ‘ Enough. Follow me—avoid the gravel—step on the grass—observe, and do as I do. Breathe not, as you value life. Come on.’

“ I obeyed the order, and we crossed silently the wilderness of a neglected garden. Clump after clump we passed through evergreens, which, from their height and closeness, appeared for many a year to have escaped the visitations of the pruning-knife. Lights, which I had indistinctly noticed from my window, beamed from a ground-floor lattice steadily,—and, directed by the fair unknown, we reached and ensconced ourselves in a patch of bushes grown into a wild exuberance of branch and leaf, directly in front, and within three or four paces of the lighted chamber.

“ Within, four men were standing, and they were talking earnestly, but in low voices. From the positions of the keeper

and the Earl's valet, at once I recognized them ; the third was a short, ill-looking man, dressed in black ; the fourth had his back turned to the window — but his height and riding-cloak assured me that he had visited my apartment, and a mask which he held in his hand confirmed the identity. In rank as well as figure he was evidently superior to the rest—his air was haughty and commanding—theirs, marked by the servility of manner, which men of lower grade assume in presence of superiors. He seemed impatient of the undertone in which the other three conversed—for, raising his voice to a pitch which rendered it audible to us, he exclaimed, ‘ What an infernal atmosphere—gin and villanous tobacco—up with the window, Pierre ! An ill-ventilated room, to me, is a perfect abomination.’

“ As he spoke, he pointed with his arm, and turned sharply round. The masked stranger was Lady Caroline's father !

“ The order was instantly obeyed. .

“ ‘ No eaves-droppers near, I hope, doctor,’ he said, addressing the ill-looking man.

“ ‘ None within pistol-shot,’ was the reply. ‘ No, no, my lord—fear nothing. This establishment, although it may appear a boast of mine, is conducted with the secrecy of the grave.’

“ ‘ But, by Heaven! I *do* fear,’ returned the Earl, passionately, ‘ and the evidence of my senses is not to be overcome by mere assertion. Where could that scoundrel learn aught about my ward?’

“ ‘ Pardon me, my lord,’ returned the man in black, ‘ but I must remind you that, by mismanagement in a quarter I need not name, too much respecting Miss Meadows got abroad—and the only portion of her history with which the world remains unacquainted is, *whither* she was conveyed, and *whether* she be dead or living. I believe that your lordship will admit that *my part* of the business was ably executed.’

“ The Earl bowed stiffly an assent.

“ ‘ But say, how could that presumptuous fool have heard anything of Mary’s fate?—how can you account for his knowledge of that infernal accident? Ere Lady Caroline fell, the villain was prostrate on the floor—insensible—unconscious of all that passed. Doctor—look sharp! There are traitors in your house—ay! in your own establishment. Nay, start not—that villain whom I hate beyond all men besides must have obtained his information *here*. Hold—ask my servant—ask your own follower what was the language the scoundrel applied to me. By Heaven! but for Pierre, I would have pistolled him on the spot. Hark, I would speak a few words alone. ’Tis nearly time we were moving—I must be home ere daybreak—for a visit of mine to this house would, were it known, create more conversation than we might desire.’

“ ‘ Nay, my lord, I will not delay you beyond a short half hour—supper is now prepared, and ’tis long since you have dined.

Go,' and he pointed to the poisoner, 'go, hasten the meal.'

" 'And you, Pierre, order the gig to the door, and wait my coming fifty yards down the lane, and under the same hedge we stopped at. We cannot, doctor, be too cautious—there's treachery in your household, or I am much deceived.'

" 'I confess, my lord,' returned the owner of the mansion, 'that what you tell me gives me unfeigned surprise. It shall be sifted carefully. None save he,' and he pointed where the keeper had left the room, 'has access to the prisoner. On his fidelity I would wager thousands. *He dare not be false to me.* Did he venture into daylight, the very pavement of the first street he passed through would rise and stone him.'

" 'A goodly security,' returned the Earl, 'and yet not the worst a man may depend upon. Are we alone?—secret?—none to interrupt—none to overhear?'

" 'This secures our privacy;' and the black-

coated scoundrel turned the key in the door: 'There,'—and he pointed towards the garden —'for fifteen years the bat has been sole proprietor. Speak freely. We are without living witnesses in that direction. Did your lordship believe in ghosts, I might not be so confident. A few departed patients, whom we did not precisely wish to expose to the order of a crowner's quest or Christian burial are there interred. As a matter of course, they may probably perambulate the garden. Well, they have it to themselves—no living foot has passed the doorway, since the last fool who hanged himself was put in clay.'

"I smiled at the false confidence of the villain. The very twain on earth, whom the scoundrel pair should most have dreaded, were, at the moment, watching every look, and hearing every whisper.

"The colloquy which ensued was interesting both to the speakers and the listeners.

"'Dutton,' said the Earl, 'I saved you from transportation.'

“ The man in black bowed.

“ ‘ I enabled you to take this place.’

“ Another assenting movement from the doctor admitted the fact.

“ ‘ Directly and indirectly, I have been your best protector since. Have I a claim upon your gratitude?’

“ ‘ My lord—the deepest;’ and the dark man bowed again.

“ ‘ Then hear me—and mark me too. That affair of my silly and obstinate ward was sufficiently troublesome, as you know—but this unhappy business occasioned by that upstart scoundrel—I need not name him—is infinitely worse, and may involve most serious consequences. How long people live in mad-houses!’ and the Earl directed a meaning side-look at the doctor. ‘ I have often thought upon it, and marvelled at the cause.’

“ ‘ Indeed, my lord,’ said the man in black, with the appearance of perfect simplicity, ‘ I have often thought the same. Quiet—abstrac-

tion from worldly care—a judicious regimen, and no annoyance—’

“ ‘ Pish ! man—no more cant—I am in no mood for nonsense. In a word—why has that obnoxious girl lived so long—and why does that aspiring pauper, whose insolent presumption has wrought my ruin, cumber the earth ? Ha ! Dutton—let us understand each other.’ ”

“ A dead silence of a minute succeeded. The peer had spoken plainly out—a direct answer was required—and the doctor hesitated to give one.

“ ‘ My lord, the ablest physiologists can only assign to general causes the duration of human existence. The best, probably, may be a good constitution, a quiet life, and temperate habits. The former the lady possessed when she came here—the latter advantages the inmates of this mansion enjoy abundantly.’ ”

“ The Earl, with marked impatience, listened to the evasive answer of the leech, and seemed with difficulty to subdue an angry outbreak.

“ ‘Dutton,’ he said, with a determined coolness not to be misunderstood, ‘reserve your foolery for fitting opportunity. While the girl lives, I feel myself insecure—but the fellow is absolutely dangerous. Were he once at liberty—’ The doctor gave a significant smile. ‘Nay, though the thing be not probable, it is possible. Gaols have been broken—mad-houses evaded. I tell you that a sword hangs over me supported by a hair—popular opinion runs strongly against me—much is suspected—and, were a little more known correctly, the finger of Scorn would be pointed at me, and I should be driven from England, a disgraced and beggared criminal. My very existence rests on the maintenance of my position in society. That secured, the storm may be weathered—that lost, poverty and exile follow. Have I not spoken plainly?’ The doctor bowed assent. ‘Dutton—no paltering. I saved you once. Fail me now—and your ruin shall follow mine.’

“ The desperate calmness of the Earl’s

manner was not to be mistaken—and the paleness of his minion's countenance proved that he understood his patron's threat.

“ ‘ My lord, you do me injustice in supposing that I am not ever obedient to a wish you intimate, instead of being indifferent to your welfare. You ask me why those you wish removed are living? Only, because I expected they would *themselves* have saved us the trouble of effecting the end desired. I have used every means to drive that girl desperate; and wherefore reason has withstood the ordeal of six years' persecution, is a mystery to me. More active means shall be resorted to. Be at ease, my lord. Before a week, expect a letter with two black seals—and when it reaches you—she who scorned your love, and he who crossed the path of your ambition—both shall be resting yonder.’

“ He pointed in the direction of the mounds at the extremity of the garden.

“ ‘ Enough—give me your hand—I shall not forget the obligation.’

“ A tap was heard at the door. The doctor opened it, and the keeper announced that supper was served.

“ ‘ Off with your cloak, my lord.— Nay, business settled, you must have some refreshment.’

“ ‘ How looks the night ?’

“ ‘ ’Twas fine an hour ago,’ was the reply.

“ ‘ Has the moon risen ?’

“ ‘ I know not,’ returned the keeper.

“ ‘ Go, look out ! You may leave the door unfastened, as his lordship will be leaving the house presently.’

“ Obedient to the orders of his employer, the poisoner unclosed a door in another side of the apartment in which the midnight council had been held, when our death had been decided on. It opened on a passage directly opposite the spot where we stood—and, as the corridor was lighted by a lamp, we could see distinctly that another door formed its termination. We observed the keeper undo the fastenings and look out upon a

moonlit space before it, and I felt my companion press my arm. I understood the pressure well. There lay a chance—the only desperate chance, of escape from a house of slaughter! We saw the villain close the door carelessly—come up the passage—enter the room—announce that the night was fine, and that the moon had risen. The Earl laid his riding-cloak aside—the doctor led the way through a side entrance to the supper-room—while the keeper's attendance was required to wait upon his master and the noble visitor.

“As the villains quitted the room and closed the door, the trembling girl, who clung to my arm for support, whispered that the moment for action had arrived. I pressed her hand, strove to calm her agitation, and endeavoured to reassure her.

“‘Lady,’ I whispered, ‘escape depends upon ourselves. If we hesitate or falter, we are lost. *Dare you venture?*’

“She returned the pressure of my hand with firmness.

“ ‘Fear not—my nerve may be a woman’s—but my heart is determined as your own.’

“ ‘Then follow me.’

“ ‘And may Heaven assist us!’ was responded.

“ We stepped easily from the garden into the deserted apartment—and, in the supper-room, heard three voices in loud and careless conversation. Flinging the Earl’s cloak around me, I wrapped my fair companion in a loose coat, which, opportunely, had been left upon a chair. We opened the door leading to the lighted corridor—threaded the passage upon tip-toe—found the fastenings, numerous and intricate, entirely removed—and the lifting of a latch was all that was needed to ensure liberty: Next moment we were standing on the green sward, and outside the infernal building. The door was softly closed—and escape had been effected without hindrance or alarm!

“ By a spontaneous impulse we both knelt, and thanked Heaven for its interposition; and

while that brief prayer was offered up, we heard our gaolers and their vile employer talking in false security—little imagining that victims devoted to the tomb were now in freedom and blessed moonlight, listening to their reckless conversation.

“ ‘Time presses,’ I whispered to my fair companion. ‘One trial more, and then Earl ——, we defy thee!’

“ ‘And what may that be?’

“ ‘His gig is waiting—and this pathway leads to the lane—for, in the moonlight, I mark a line of hedge.’

“ ‘But, is there not a man there?’

“ ‘Yes, lady, and that man must be disposed of. Advance silently—he must be taken by surprise.’

“To slay the scoundrel would not have caused me a single thought—but Pierre was more easily mastered. I was now well supplied with weapons—as, in addition to my own, I found a brace of pistols in the pockets of the Earl’s cloak. For a moment, the true

direction where the vehicle waited its owner's coming was rather doubtful, but the humming of an air from some Italian opera announced the locality of the valet. Deceived by the cloaked figure which approached him, Pierre fancied that in me he saw his master—and a shattering blow from the but-end of a heavy pistol, which stretched him on the sward, was the first intimation of his mistake.

“Never was blow given with better will—and never did one prove more effective. Without a sign of life, the villain remained prostrate at my feet—while, to render ‘assurance doubly sure,’ with his own handkerchiefs I bound him hand and foot. That task performed, I placed my fellow-captive in the vehicle of him who had brought our death-warrant to the house of murder—and while Lord —— supposed, that those whose existence his midnight interview had limited to the brief period of a week, were occupants of a cell which was only to be quitted for the grave, in the bright moonlight, fast as a high-

bred horse could speed them, they were placing many a mile between them and their oppressors.

“I heard afterwards, the *finale* to the story of our escape, so far as our enemies were concerned. The Earl had latterly resorted to wine, probably, to drown unhappy recollections—and, satisfied with the result of his interview with the villanous agent whom he patronised, he far exceeded the brief time he had intended to allot to supper. An hour after we had quitted the house, he proceeded leisurely, attended by the doctor, and his satellite, the poisoner, to the place where Pierre was supposed to be in waiting. Horse and gig were gone; and on the ground lay a dark bundle.

“‘Curse on that scoundrel of mine! he has been drinking,’ exclaimed the Earl. ‘He misunderstood my orders. What, ho! Pierre! Villain! Hold! what is this?’

“The keeper stooped.

“ ‘ A man, my lord ; dead, or dead-drunk. No—by Heaven ! bound and bleeding !’

“ ‘ Ha !—raise him—Pierre !—damnation !’

“ The doctor examined the wounded man.

“ ‘ Scarcely life in him,’ he muttered.

“ ‘ In the devil’s name,’ exclaimed the Earl, ‘ what means this ?’

“ ‘ All is utterly incomprehensible to me,’ was the reply.

“ The Italian was carried to the house, his wounds dressed, and every means resorted to that could restore recollection. In half an hour memory returned, and he was enabled to state, but indistinctly, the singular occurrence of the night. He had been suddenly assaulted, and beaten to the ground by a person, apparently his master.

“ Never had that infamous den, the scene of many a dark deed and ‘ midnight murder,’ been placed in such ‘ admired confusion.’ Another half-hour elapsed, consumed in wild conjectures—and the true cause of this mysterious occurrence was never even guessed at.

At last the Earl's cloak was missed ; for, when he had sought it, he fancied that Pierre had returned, and placed it in the gig. It was gone ! The open window next attracted notice. Search in the garden led the Earl and his attendants to the bench beneath the window of my prison. Need I add, that an open window and suspended cord increased the general alarm. The room was entered—its inmate was not forthcoming—the bell was rung—every cell searched—and every cell was tenanted save two. The victims had escaped—the murderers were ‘left lamenting.’

“The scene which followed may be rather fancied than described. Violent reproaches on one side were replied by bitter recrimination on the other.

“ ‘Dog ! whom I rescued from the gallows—you have betrayed your benefactor !’

“ ‘No, my lord—fidelity to you has wrought my ruin beyond redemption.’

“ ‘In the fiend's name !’ exclaimed the peer, ‘how has this infernal affair occurred ?’

“ ‘By every thing sacred,’ was the reply, ‘I cannot even hazard a conjecture!’

“The poisoner remained perfectly unmoved.

“ ‘It’s a comfort,’ he muttered to himself, ‘to see the two greatest scoundrels in Britain after all so miserable. But how the devil did the thing occur?’

“The country we passed was bleak and desolate—heath and dwarf-plantations came in close succession—and for miles we did not meet a farm-house. A faster animal I never drove. After the two hours we journeyed rapidly, we had reason to believe that pursuit would prove unavailing; and at a little inn, where roads intersected, I pulled up, to rest the Earl’s horse, and refresh my wearied companion.

“A half-extinguished lamp glanced feebly on the sign-board—for the inmates of this retired hostelry had long since retired to bed. I sounded loudly on the bell—the summons was replied to—the horse was taken from the

gig, and inducted to a stable, while a comfortable meal—call it breakfast or supper, as the hour was four—was laid upon the table with reasonable despatch.

“I cannot describe my feelings, but I can fancy similar ones—those of a reprieved convict, or a rescued mariner—some one, in short, with whom hope was over—and to whom, in the last hour assigned for his existence, an unexpected pardon or deliverance had been granted. Such were my feelings when, returning from the stable, I rejoined my fair companion. I laid the Earl's cloak aside—placed the pistols on the table—and referring to the purse I had hidden in my breast, and the weapons at my hand, I felt myself once more a free man!

“A discovery, however, that I had made, added to our embarrassment. After the hostler had brought his light, every order I gave was answered by a bow, and on every occasion I was liberally be-lorded. An examination of our vehicle at once explained the

causes to which I was indebted for this honourable reception—for, on the panels of the gig and the harness of the horse, an Earl's coronet was emblazoned. However flattering this might be to pride, it was any thing but conducive to security; and I determined, on arriving at the next town, to exchange my aristocratic equipage for an humbler carriage.

“When my companion was refreshed, and the horse had rested, we resumed our journey. A couple of hours brought us to the town of ——. A post-carriage was procured—the Earl's gig left in charge of the innkeeper—and, with light hearts and fresh horses, we took the road again.”

END OF VOL. I.

FREDERICK SHOBERL, JUNIOR,
PRINTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT,
51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET, LONDON.

CAPTAIN O'SULLIVAN;

OR,

ADVENTURES,

CIVIL, MILITARY, AND MATRIMONIAL,

OF A

GENTLEMAN ON HALF PAY.

BY

W. H. MAXWELL, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "STORIES OF WATERLOO," ETC.

And, oh! I feel there is but *one*—

One Mary in the world for me!

MOORE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1846.

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CAPTAIN O'SULLIVAN.

CHAPTER XIII.

LORD ——'S WARD—FIRST LOVE.

Ferdinand. Hear my soul speak :
The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service ; there resides,
To make me slave to it.

Miranda. Do you love me ?

Ferdinand. O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound,
And crown what I profess with kind event,
If I speak true ; if hollowly, invert
What best is boded me, to mischief ! I,
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world,
Do love, prize, honour you.

Miranda. I am a fool
To weep at what I am glad of.

THE TEMPEST.

“ Having given ample directions to ‘ mine
host’ of the Black Bear, to ensure the safe
return of the Earl’s vehicle and cloak, we

proceeded to the next town, where we had determined to obtain some necessary clothing, and consider what course should be adopted for present security and future support. It appeared manifest that some singular freak of fortune had linked our destinies together—and that, united by the bond of misfortune, the same fate was reserved for both.

“You may think it odd that I have not described the personal appearance of one to whom I had been so strangely introduced, and through whose agency the means of escape from death had been afforded. From the first evening I had seen her in the garden, events had followed each other with a rapidity which made them seem rather the wild creations of a fearful dream than actual realities; and it was not until, safe from pursuit, we found ourselves seated quietly in a country inn, that I had calmness and opportunity to examine the features and learn the private history of my fair companion and preserver.

“She was decidedly handsome—but hers was but the wreck of former beauty. The outline of the face was regular—the eye dark and intelligent; and while coal-black hair and well-arched brows contrasted with cheeks pale as the marble of an artist, the whole expression of the face had a melancholy wildness which might denote unsettled intellect, or have arisen from the painful excitement attendant upon ‘hope deferred,’ and blighted fortunes. Her figure was particularly graceful, and, although attenuated, its proportions were unexceptionable — none could look upon the unknown without mingled feelings—and it was doubtful whether pity or admiration would predominate the most.

“Misfortune, it is said, accustoms men to strange bedfellows — and a community in suffering and danger is still more powerful in uniting persons by the mutual interest which springs from reciprocated sympathy. Such feelings influenced me and the unknown. An acquaintance, originating in accident, had

been hurried into intimacy — and long before we knew the other's history, we had played a desperate game, and tested mutual fidelity. We felt like isolated beings flung on each other for support — she the protected — I the protector.

“ ‘Mary,’ I said, as I took her hand in mine, ‘how close the union of our fortunes seems, and yet how little do we know of the secret causes which bind our fates together! Would you confide in me, and tell me the story of an early life with which so much mystery appears to be involved?’

“ ‘Willingly,’ was the reply. ‘The child of misfortune has nothing to blush for, save the villany of others. Mine is a sad tale, but from you concealment would be unnecessary — nay, ungenerous. God knows, how heavily I have been wronged — how foully faith plighted to a dying parent was violated — and how villanously helpless orphanage was abused!’

“She paused for a minute as if to collect

her wandering thoughts, and then commenced her melancholy narrative.

“I am well descended — my mother was the heiress of Sir Philip Rawleigh, and my father's family one of the oldest on the borders. In birth my parents were tolerably equal—but fortune was entirely on the lady's side, as Sir Philip had acquired wealth in the Indies, while my father was left an unportioned orphan. Intended for the church, by the bounty of a distant relative, he had passed one of the English universities and taken its highest honours. As a scholar and gentleman, none held a higher reputation — and, singular as it may appear, to that proud distinction the misfortunes of his unhappy orphan may be traced.

“The Earl of —, in public estimation, was second to no peer in Britain. A favourite with the monarch, he was at the same time an object of general popularity. To parliamentary talent, he united the attainments of the scholar; and, were one desired to

name a noble of the highest caste at that day, the claim of the noble Earl to this most honourable pre-eminence would have passed unquestioned. He had an only son—the heir to his ancient title and estates—who had been carefully educated under his parent's eye; and on entering Oxford the Earl made diligent inquiry for one to whom his further literary progress should be entrusted. My father was recommended—the task of completing the young nobleman's education was offered to him—and, unfortunately, he undertook the duty.

“The collegiate career of his noble pupil was not satisfactory to his tutor. He had talents, but he would not cultivate them; and irregularities in his conduct were often and severely censured. At last, Lord —— graduated—my father's tutelage ended—and, under the charge of a foreigner of showy accomplishments and fashionable manners, he left his native land to travel.

“The new preceptor and the pupil were

worthy of each other. Without a shade of principle, the Chevalier de Bomont was an infidel and a voluptuary—but, the most artful scoundrel in existence, his specious manners and boundless duplicity masked his true character effectually. No wonder then that one whose disposition was inherently vicious, under such tutelage, matured every bad principle nature had implanted. For five years Lord —— continued on the continent, and a shorter probation would have rendered him, what he returned, an adept in vice, and familiar with profligacy in all its phases. A more dangerous individual was never loosed upon society—sensual and cold-blooded, he veiled heartless depravity under an imposing address—bland and open manners lulled the destined victim into false security—and, when about to stab, the Earl concealed his purpose with a smile.

“During his quondam pupil’s absence on the continent, my father had left the university, obtained a benefice, and married. The

income of his living was small, but my mother's fortune was ample — and a year after the union, by the death of Sir William Rawleigh, my father succeeded to fifty thousand pounds. Wealth, however, brought no addition to his happiness. His lady's health became seriously impaired—the seeds of consumption showed themselves — and, by medical advice, a warmer climate was resorted to. Change of country failed to arrest the progress of this most insidious of diseases — and, after lingering a year, my mother left him a widower, and me, in infancy, an orphan.

“The sudden demise of his excellent and lamented parent had recalled the present Earl to England; and, when he took possession of the ancient hall, as my father's vicarage was in the immediate vicinity of — Park, the quondam tutor and his pupil renewed their former intimacy. Never were two beings less adapted for the society of each other—the one, confiding, charitable, and unsuspecting — thinking no guile himself,

he imputed none to others; and, with an open heart and generous disposition, he looked upon men and their actions as they pretended to be, and not as they were. In a word, he was from his better nature framed to become a dupe—and unhappily he fell into the power of one gifted with every evil quality to make him one.

“Nothing could surpass the matchless artifice with which the Earl led on his victim, step by step, until he had obtained a boundless influence over his acts—nay, over his very thoughts. Years wore on—‘wild youth passed,’ but time wrought no change in the character of Lord ——. In other relations of life, he had been tried and found wanting—a cold-hearted and grasping landlord, his tenantry disliked him—tales of criminality abroad, and profligacy at home, were more than whispered—it was reported that he was a confirmed gambler, and anything but a fair one—a cold and faithless husband—and a brutal father.

“ And yet he maintained over my deluded parent an ascendancy almost magical; and time, which might have been expected to remove the delusion, appeared only to confirm it. Attacked by a chronic disease, tedious, but incurable, as my father's health failed and the mind weakened with the body, the Earl's power became paramount, and the dying man became a mere puppet in the hands of his betrayer. On his death-bed he appointed him my guardian—placed my fortune under his absolute control — committed me solemnly to his care—and expired in the full assurance, that in his false friend his child had found a father, and that the look upturned to Heaven, with which the Earl invoked God to witness how sacredly his duty to the orphan should be performed, indicated the fidelity with which the pledge should be redeemed. Alas! 'twas but the acting of a finished hypocrite, and his promises to the dying dupe were ‘ false as dicers' oaths !’

“ I was educated at a public school—years passed away—I had never known a parent’s care, but falling into kind and able hands, I had become attached to the family, and an order from my noble guardian to remove me occasioned the first severe grief I can remember. I was now fifteen—well-grown—in appearance almost a woman—in knowledge of what the world was, less than a child in experience.

“ The house to which I was removed was situated in a retired neighbourhood, and tenanted by a lady, by whom, as I was informed by my guardian, my education was to be completed. My curiosity was much excited by the Earl’s letter which announced this unexpected intelligence, and, during my journey to this new abode, I amused myself by conjecturing what sort of person my new protectress would prove. I had secret misgivings that I should not find the motherly kindness which for eight years had been bestowed upon me by the clergyman’s wife,

under whose maternal care I had been brought up—and I had sad cause afterwards to discover that these ominous apprehensions were but too well founded.

“ When, on the second evening of my journey, I reached my destination, and was introduced to Madame d’Arville, I could not but draw a mental, and, I must add, a very unfavourable contrast between my new preceptress and the gentle and modest personage whose roof I had quitted for ever. In middle age, Mrs. Mordaunt was a favourable specimen of an English wife. Her beauty was matronly, her dress plain, neat and becoming—the expression of her face, mild intelligence—and, during an intimacy of eight years, I never saw her unruffled temper display even a momentary impatience. Exemplary as a mother and a wife, to all, in their respective relations, she discharged her duties faithfully—and a happy home and well-regulated family attested the value of a pure heart and good example. Madame d’Arville was in her thirtieth year.

Her beauty was a little *passé*, but still it was more than attractive. Her cast of countenance was decidedly foreign, and her dark hair and lustrous eyes were magnificent. A figure, tall, voluptuous, and commanding, had every advantage which art could bestow upon it. Every movement was graceful—every look intended for effect—but nothing had been left to nature—all was studied—all was artificial; and while the eye was fascinated, the heart remained untouched. When I was introduced to her boudoir, she received me with open arms, kissed me with the ardent warmth of a sister, and lavished praises on my beauty. Oh! how different was the parting embrace, the fond farewell of Mrs. Mordaunt, as she held me to her throbbing bosom! Commending me to God's protection, she did no homage to my beauty, but whispered that the world had trials and temptations for the young—and told me that personal advantages required a closer communion with Heaven, to obtain the only true support that would enable me to

pass through the ordeal which awaited me uninjured.

“ Mine had been a sound and serious education, and in a few days I discovered the utter incompetency of Madame d'Arville to succeed to that charge which my reverend instructress had executed so admirably. Generally uninformed, and almost illiterate, she possessed but two accomplishments—music and dancing—and she considered that they embraced all that a female should be taught. In dress her whole thoughts were concentrated—the business of the toilet was to her the occupation of existence; and, ere a fortnight had elapsed, young as I was, I could not but regard with every feeling but reverence a woman whose character was, even in my inexperienced eyes, so thoroughly contemptible.

“ I had brought with me a small collection of excellent books, mostly presents and prizes given me by Mrs. Mordaunt, and I need scarcely observe that religion and instruction

formed their subjects. They were cursorily looked over by madame. Some she examined with indifference, while the titles of others excited a sneer. All were thrown aside with the designation 'stupid nonsense!' and a sarcastic observation of 'what a ridiculous old frump Mrs. Mordaunt must have been!' To other books, however, she directed my attention—French novels and Italian tales. Never was I more astonished than when I glanced over their contents. All were offensive to morality, and some so indelicate that I felt my cheeks redden as I flung them from me in disgust.

“Lonely as the mansion was, still the style of the establishment, though small, was particularly elegant. To the simple comforts I had enjoyed in Mr. Mordaunt's parsonage, the luxury of Madame d'Arville's château was strongly contrasted. Every meal was attended with display—the few domestics were dressed in the richest liveries—the beaufet presented a variety of costly wines—and in her domicile

it was evident that economy was little consulted.

“ With two exceptions, the servants were foreigners—and these were the gardener and a very interesting village girl. All besides, the lady of the mansion not excepted, spoke English imperfectly ; and in a remote district whose dialect was remarkable, but for the assistance of these native domestics, the household communications with the peasantry would at times have been with difficulty maintained. Susan, upon my arrival, was named my personal attendant ; and, only two or three years older than myself, the handsome villager and I became sincerely attached. The male attendants on Madame d'Arville were Italians—her maid, in whom unbounded confidence appeared to be reposed, a Neapolitan ; and Carlotta exercised a singular and undisputed authority not only over the mansion, but over the mistress herself.

“ This favourite domestic was a few years younger than her lady, and, with a neat figure

and pretty face, united great shrewdness and decision. She had talents to render her an able ally, or a dangerous foe—intuitive insight into character, quick perception, profound cunning, and a determination of purpose rarely found in woman. In the management of this secluded household everything was done in obedience to her will; and yet, while all were directed like puppets, none could trace the agency by which the movements were effected.

“ Had I knowledge of the world, much of the secret history of the château would have been speedily disclosed to me. I had been taught French and Italian—knew both languages literally; but from natural diffidence, declined attempting to speak either in the presence of madame. When, in answer to her inquiries, I assured her that I was an indifferent musician, and a most unaccomplished *danseuse*, she lifted her hands and eyes together in astonishment. ‘ Do you not speak French fluently?’ My answer was a decided

negative. 'Not converse in Italian?' I shook my head. This slight conversation confirmed a previous estimate of my general ignorance; and because I did not *speak* the language, it was never suspected that I *understood* it; and, under this misconception, the lady and her domestics conversed with as much unreserved freedom in my presence as they did in that of the young villager.

"Several months passed; my life was dull and uniform, and, excepting at meals, Madame d'Arville and I seldom met. She complained of climate and want of covered carriages, and rarely walked farther than the garden—Carlotta, in-doors and out of doors, her constant attendant; while I, hitherto accustomed to a life of active employment in which mental and bodily exercise were happily combined, read and worked if the weather were unpropitious, and, if favourable, in Susan's company wandered over the adjacent heaths and sea-beach.

"I must acquaint you," said the outcast,

addressing himself to me, "that four-and-twenty years since, the coast of —— was the constant scene of wild adventure, and consequently, of the crimes to which lawless enterprise will always tend. Smuggling then was at its height—not the sneaking, shuffling, system of deception by which it is now carried on, but by a bold brigandage which challenged opposition, and placed the majesty of law at defiance. The means taken to prevent it were irregular and imperfect; daring and experience generally evaded detection—cargoes were landed wholesale, while a decoy boat, not worth its capture, carried away every official in false chase—the shadow saved the substance; and the *contrabandistas*, stimulated by success, more extensively and more desperately plunged into fresh adventures. The domestic occurrences of these times will tell the rest. Confessions ending in homicide—witnesses foully removed—law angrily and vindictively administered—a fatal system opposed to every principle of honesty, producing .

a demoralized peasantry, on the other part met by a strong hand ill-directed—law against licence—encouraging crime by faulty measures for repression, and, ‘few and far between,’ when accident placed the offender within the reach of justice, he was visited with an uncompromising ferocity which elicited pity for the criminal, and, even in cases of murder, destroyed the effect which example can only warrant in the infliction of capital punishment. This digression will be necessary to render the narrative of my fair companion sufficiently intelligible.

“ It was during one of these rambles, (she continued,) that the first adventure of my life occurred. Susan and I were returning from an evening stroll by the sea-side, and were slowly ascending a pathway that wound from the beach to the moorland, when at a bending of the narrow road a figure dashed wildly past us. By a sudden impulse he checked his headlong flight, listened for a moment, then in a low but rapid tone of voice muttered,

'Be silent, or my life is sacrificed!' sprang from the pathway into a fissure in the cliff. All this was the action of half a minute.

"I was terror-stricken, and remained rivetted to the spot, with my eyes fixed upon the chasm in the bank, where the stranger had disappeared. Susan's, however, was a bolder spirit—she listened.—'They come,' she said. 'Go forward, lady, or the poor fellow will be murdered.' She caught my arm—hurried me up the pathway—and we had barely cleared the ravine, when half-a-dozen savage-looking men, armed and well-mounted, rushed at a gallop from the beach.

"The leader instantly pulled up—I cowered behind my companion—but Susan's presence of mind did not desert her.

"'So ho!' he exclaimed, 'you saw a man run past. Which way did he head?'

"'A man run past?' returned my bolder companion, while I nearly sank upon the ground.

"'Ay—a man—not a minute since—speak.

What frightens that silly girl? We will not harm her. Which way did the fellow take?"

" 'No man passed here,' returned the attendant.

" 'Hell and furies!' exclaimed a second rider, 'we have overrun the chase completely. I told you he would dodge us at Black Dick's Gap. But you're always so devilish positive.'

" 'No,' returned the leader, angrily; 'he passed it—I'll swear he—'

" 'Bah!' exclaimed the other. ' 'Tis impossible—these girls must have seen him.'

" 'What, in the devil's name, is to be done?'

" 'Why, we have made a wrong cast, and we must redeem the mistake,' was the reply. 'No chance but one remains. He'll make for Squire Davis's plantations, and skulk there till night—and if he gain the wood, he's safe as if on board the lugger. Damnation! had my advice been followed, we should have shared one hundred pounds. But let us be off, as it is no use jawing longer. If we can

cross the heath before him, he can't escape us, after all.'

"As he spoke, the rider turned his horse's head, and, spurring over the moorland at full speed, in a few minutes the party disappeared.

"All this passed so rapidly, that I remained in breathless astonishment, and it was only when these wild horsemen vanished in the dipping of the heath, that I recovered my self-possession. Susan, with fearless determination, watched them out of sight.

" 'Thank Heaven!' she ejaculated, as the hindmost rider disappeared. 'He is saved. Come, madame, we must secure him from running again into the danger he has so narrowly avoided.'

"Turning back, my companion led the way, descended the path, and I followed. Stopping before the chasm where the fugitive had taken shelter, she announced that his pursuers had crossed the heath. Next moment the unknown issued from his conceal-

ment, advanced with dignity, took our hands in his, and, with the ease and language of a gentleman, thanked us warmly for his deliverance.

“ ‘ To your fidelity and discretion I am indebted for my life—and never was a man succoured in his extremity by fairer preservers. Say, lady,’ he continued, addressing himself to me, ‘ who shall I name as my good angel in my prayers? and to whom is Will, the Ranger, bound for ever to be grateful?’

“ ‘ Will, the Ranger!’ exclaimed my companion, as she recoiled.

“ ‘ Fear nothing, pretty one,’ said the stranger, with a smile. ‘ What—harm thee? Oh—no—I would shed my heart’s blood to prove my gratitude, could it but pay the debt I owe thee.’

“ ‘ And are you the man whom all admire and dread?’ inquired my attendant, timidly.

“ ‘ I am, indeed, him, surnamed the Ranger,’ returned the stranger, with a smile. ‘ Alas! in a lawless life there is little to admire, and,

were the truth known, perhaps, in me as little to be dreaded. But say, who do I address?—where do you reside?—and when shall I again have an opportunity to see and thank my fair preservers?"

"While this brief conversation passed between Susan and the stranger, I had been eagerly examining a personage who seemed to carry terror with his very name—but in his appearance there was nothing to excite alarm, and whatever dreaded qualities he possessed, were concealed under an exterior calculated to produce very different impressions.

"The Ranger was remarkably handsome—his figure tall, active, and commanding—and as he had removed his sea-cap while addressing us, I could carefully examine his face, and none could be more prepossessing. A laughing eye of brilliant hazel—a high, bold forehead, half-hidden by the brown hair which curled profusely around it—nose, mouth, and teeth, all in perfect keeping with each other—

united to form a countenance, which none could deny to be eminently handsome, but whose expression was even more winning than its regularity. His dress was the ordinary one worn by seafaring men—probably of superior materials. He was armed—for in a black waist-belt he carried a cutlass and pistols, while the haft of a dagger peeped from a side-pocket in his jacket.

“ At his repeated entreaties, we told him who we were, and pointed out the château, as the house was termed by its foreign occupants; and, when we parted, we gave him an assurance that on the following evening we would revisit the place, where this first interview occurred under such singular and alarming circumstances.

CHAPTER XIV.

WILL, THE RANGER—THE PLOT THICKENS.

Capulet.—But what say you to Thursday?*Paris.*—My lord, I would that Thursday were to-morrow.*Cap.*—Well—get you gone : o' Thursday be it then—
Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed ;
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding day.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ As we proceeded home, I need scarcely tell you, that the Ranger engrossed our conversation, and that I learned all the particulars of his history and exploits with which Susan was acquainted. Her information, however, on the subject was confined to a village rumour, and was not very extensive. He was a smuggler and an outlaw, admired vastly by the peasantry, and dreaded by excisemen. For two or three years, during

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which he infested this coast, his landings had been as successful as his escapes were miraculous—and, until three months before, he managed by ability and fine seamanship to get in safety from the coast. But at last he was chased, overtaken, and would have been captured, had he not resorted to the desperate alternative of fighting the king's cutter. Here, too, fortune befriended him—for he managed to disable his opponent. In effecting his escape, however, several of the cutter's crew were wounded; and, in consequence, the *Ranger* was declared an outlaw, and a price put upon his head.

“ On the next evening we were punctual to the promise given, and met the stranger again. These meetings' continued daily—and, when we separated, I shall never forget the impatient feelings with which I looked forward until evening came again, and we hastened to the cliffs. Unconscious of the truth, I had lost my heart to this wild adventurer—and, when he announced his imme-

diate departure, and pressed me to see him and say farewell, a passionate burst of tears was the reply, and told him that I assented.

“ The evening came, and I set out with Susan to meet the possessor of a heart which had never known a preference before. I had read stories of first love—and, alas! was fated to feel its intensity. The Ranger was waiting for us—and, while we sate down together on a bank, Susan mounted the cliff to watch against surprise.

“ It would be useless to detail the scene that followed. Kneeling at my feet, my wild admirer owned his passion, and I artlessly admitted that his love was faithfully reciprocated. He caught me to his heart, kissed me again and again, while I reclined sobbing on his breast. At this moment Susan gave the signal that strangers were approaching.

“ ‘ One parting kiss,’ exclaimed the outlaw, ‘ and one parting promise, Mary.’

“ As he spoke, he drew a ring from his finger, and placed it upon mine.

“ ‘Hear me, Mary,’ he whispered. ‘This may be the last time you and I may meet in this world. A trial awaits me—if fortune smile, the object which brought me to this coast will be accomplished—should I fail, I know the penalty, and am prepared to meet it as a man ought. Within twelve hours I may be cold as that stone’—and he turned over a pebble with his foot—‘and even in an adventurous career like mine, now while standing probably on the brink of eternity, this is a solemn moment in a life. Here, and by this emblem, I plight thee my lasting love. Wilt thou pledge thine?’

“What was my answer? I flung myself into his arms, and, in an agony of grief, murmured a promise of eternal constancy and love.

“Again Susan gave the signal that we should separate.

“ ‘One instant and we part,’ he hastily exclaimed. ‘You will, before many hours elapse, hear tidings of Will, the Ranger.

Should fortune fail him, his last thoughts and dying prayers shall be thine — should he succeed, the wanderer will return, ere long, and claim his promised bride.'

" ' Are you mad ? ' exclaimed a voice—and Susan impatiently waved her arm, and pointed to the beach. ' Men have landed from a boat,' she cried, ' and head directly this way.'

" ' They are no enemies,' said the outlaw, ' but the parting moment is come.'

" Again he pressed me to his heart; and, as if the act required a sudden and determined effort, he placed me gently on the bank, bounded down the cliff, and hurried towards the spot where Susan had observed the men debarking.

" ' Well,' said the attendant, as we slowly crossed the moor, ' I half wish that Robert had been a smuggler. Why, we meet and talk in the garden so quietly—and we reckon how much it will cost to furnish the cottage, and buy a cow—and all the time he rests upon his spade, and speaks as calmly as we do in

the servants' hall when work is over. But, Lord! what a different lover the Ranger is! Why, in five minutes you got more kisses than I within a fortnight. Ha! something has occurred—see, a horseman dismounts at the gate—and at our dull place we seldom see a visiter. He seems to be a servant. But let us hasten, for madame remarked last night at supper, that our walks were longer and more frequent than formerly.'

"Two hours passed, and I was sitting at the fire listening to Susan's gossip—its theme, the exploits of the Ranger—when the door opened, and an unusual visiter came in—madame's woman, Carlotta.

" 'Supper is being served,' she said, 'and I have news for Mademoiselle. The Marquis and two visiteurs come to the château to-morrow—but, blessed angels! what a beautiful ring!'

"My hand unconsciously was resting on the table, and I had not removed the outlaw's gift.

“ ‘ A brilliant !’ continued the waiting-woman, as she raised my hand, and examined the ring more closely ; ‘ ’tis worth a thousand francs.’

“ Confused . and surprised, I made no answer, but Susan’s ready wit came luckily to my assistance.

“ ‘ A farewell present from a schoolfellow,’ she replied. ‘ Is it not pretty, Carlotta?’

“ ‘ Oh, paste, of course,’ returned the attendant of Madame, ‘ and yet by candlelight, and in a crowd, it would pass current for a diamond. An excellent imitation, certainly.’

“ She quitted the room, Susan and I blessing our good genius for thus narrowly evading a very awkward discovery. The ring was carefully put aside, and I descended to the parlour.

“ Madame was usually thoughtful, and the visit of the Marquis seemed to her an important occurrence ; for after supper she read the letter the courier had brought thrice over, while at times she was lost in thought, and

muttered to herself. I rose immediately the meal was finished, and, as I ascended the stairs, heard the bell ring, and Carlotta summoned to attend her mistress. The first interview for many years with a guardian I but indistinctly recollected, scarcely occasioned a care. One engrossing object occupied my mind — the Ranger was ever present. I thought of him waking — his name was mingled in my prayers — a thousand times his ring was pressed to my lips and heart — and in my dreams I sat beside him on the cliff — heard him declare his love, and in return I plighted mine. No wonder that my slumbers were broken and unrefreshing, until nature became exhausted — and I was fast asleep when Susan came to dress me.

“ One glance at the attendant's face told me that something important had occurred.

“ ‘ Oh, Miss Mary !’ she exclaimed, after bolting the door carefully. ‘ Such a scene there was after you quitted the supper room !’

There's mischief in this visit of my lord, and you are deeply concerned.'

" 'Then our meetings at the cliff have been discovered, Susan?'

" 'No, no, no,'—was the rapid reply. 'Not a suspicion of the kind exists; but let me tell you the story in my own way.'

" 'Go on,' I said; 'you have excited both my fears and my curiosity.'

" 'Well, as the night was fine, and as Robert and I wished to talk a little by ourselves, I slipped into the garden unperceived, where he was waiting for me. One of the window-shutters of the dining-room was half unclosed — we saw you retire, and presently Carlotta came in. I have often told you, Miss, how intimate Madame and her maid are, but last night discovered more than ever I could have imagined. When Carlotta entered the room, she pulled a chair to the fire, filled a glass with wine, and seemed perfectly her lady's equal. Robert and I watched what followed, for, as you know, the windows of

the room open on the garden. My lord's letter was read, and rest assured there's mischief in it. Madame expostulated — Carlotta stormed like a fury — your name was mentioned every minute—matters became worse — Heaven knows they spoke loud enough, could Robert and I but understand their gibberish. At last both started from their seats — Carlotta crossed the table to her mistress — held her clenched hand to Madame's face — poured out a volley of abuse — and left the room, darting a look at the lady, which made me tremble, and which I shall remember to my dying day.'

“ ‘ What can it all mean, Susan ?’

“ ‘ Heaven alone can tell—but, Miss Mary, there's mischief in the wind, and you are deeply concerned.’

“ ‘ What is to be done ? I am at the mercy of strangers—not a friend to pity and assist me.’

“ ‘ That is unkind, Miss Mary,’ said the attendant, as her eyes filled and her cheeks

flushed; 'am *I* not to be trusted? *I* that would fly with you over the world—'

" 'Forgive me, dear Susan — I spoke thoughtlessly — I know your fidelity, and in you put my sole reliance.'

" 'Ay, and you have another friend besides — Robert would follow me through fire. He's but a gardener, it's true—but there's not a man on the wide border that he would turn his back upon. Come, courage.'

" I flung my arms round the neck of my pretty and warm-hearted attendant, and presently repaired to the breakfast-room, where I found Madame d'Arville already waiting for me.

" If my sleep had been disturbed, I should say that her slumbers had been still more unrefreshing. Whether that her toilet had not been attended to, or that art could not conceal the workings of 'a mind diseased,' certainly Madame d'Arville's countenance betrayed time's encroachments, and looked anything but happy.

“ She received me with more than ordinary kindness, embraced, kissed me, and complimented me on my looks. Never was a falser compliment paid — the pier-glass reflected cheeks pale as they are now—and the information Susan had given occasioned an anxious expression, which did not escape the observations of the lady of the mansion.

“ ‘ How pretty,’ she said, ‘ and yet how pale—these long walks must be discontinued—exposure to this horrid climate would rob an angel of her beauty. Would that we were once more in Italy!—this dull and lonely mansion is destructive to one’s happiness and looks—should you not wish to leave it?’

“ I started at the question, but in a moment answered that I would.

“ ‘ And whither, child?’

“ ‘ To the guardian of my infancy—to her who proved a second mother—Mrs. Mor-daunt.’

“ Madame d’Arville stared at my reply.

“ ‘ What—return to school! Bah! you

jest. No, no—yours will be a happier change — a house—a home—a husband.'

" 'What mean you, madame?' I inquired, with marked astonishment.

" 'Why, that your kind guardian, Lord ——, anticipates your wishes,' returned the lady, coolly, 'and brings a suitor here this evening. All has been already arranged—are you not overjoyed?'

" 'No, madame, I am astounded. A union arranged for me, and with a man with whom I am totally unacquainted! Nay, madame, 'tis you who jest.'

" 'Well, be it so—your guardian will explain matters better than I can.'

" Her woman had answered the bell, and to her she gave some trifling orders. Susan's disclosures had excited my curiosity, and I observed the bearing of the mistress and her maid. Madame's indifference was affected—Carlotta received her orders with contemptuous silence—while in answer to Madame d'Arville's remark of 'I have told Marie that

my *surveillance* will be ended speedily,' a look of fearful meaning was directed to her, and another of deadly hatred turned on me. What could all this portend? I consulted Susan, but her conjectures were vague as my own.

“ While the day passed, an unusual bustle among the domestics, and frequent and angry interviews between madame and her maid, roused Susan's curiosity, like my own, to the highest pitch imaginable. On me more serious thoughts obtruded. Where was my wild lover? and how sped the arduous trial upon which life and death depended ?

“ With evening the visitors arrived — a carriage rolled across the courtyard — and three men, closely muffled, alighted from the coach. An hour passed — a message from madame summoned me to the drawing-room, and, when I entered it, I found the strangers conversing with the lady of the house.

“ ‘ Ha ! my fair ward,’ exclaimed the tallest and most *distingué* of the group, as he ad-

vanced with an air of free authority, and passing his arm round my waist, pressed his lips to mine. At this unceremonious liberty my cheeks coloured, while from his embrace I recoiled as if by animal instinct. Madame introduced him to me as my guardian, the Earl of —, and then in turn presented me to his companions—the Chevalier de Bomont, and Count d'Arlincourt.

“ I need not describe the Earl to you. The Chevalier was a man of sixty, of gentlemanly appearance and courtly address. The Count, scarcely half that age, with a showy person united to regular and handsome features—but the expression of his face was unfavourable—his manner presumptuous—and, from our first introduction, I regarded him with feelings of aversion.

“ Unacquainted with society, and educated in strict retirement, the manners and social intercourse of the visitors and the lady of the mansion appeared to me at times inharmonious and artificial. There was a sof-

tened haughtiness in the Earl's bearing to his companions, which seemed an effort of condescension, and a pliancy of address in the Chevalier, which betrayed dependency. Without the ease of the former, or the tact of the latter, d'Arlincourt was unable to keep up a semblance of equality. The Earl seemed to tolerate his familiarity with impatience—while the Chevalier, during a trifling argument, dissented from a statement of his friend, with the indifference of carelessness, if not contempt. None seemed at ease—and, probably, to judge by circumstances, the lady of the mansion was the most uncomfortable.

“The wine circulated freely, and De Bomont was the only person who did not indulge liberally. The effect of the bottle was singularly remarkable on the drinkers. Madame became free and talkative—the Count familiar—and, as regarded me, in look and manner almost insolent. On the Earl the effect was very opposite—his thoughtful air almost changed to sadness—

and some idle pleasantries of the Count, and gay sallies of madame, were returned with a coldness bordering on severity.

“ Coffee was introduced, and I was about leaving to retire to my chamber, when the door opened, and a man entered unannounced. At the same moment, and by a different door, Carlotta glided in and whispered something to her mistress. Her eyes met d'Arlincourt's—and I alone remarked the looks mutually interchanged—one of entreaty and deprecation on his part, returned by a threatening glance by the *femme de chambre*, in which scorn and hatred intermingled. The high and excited tone with which the Earl addressed the stranger at once commanded and obtained attention.

“ ‘ Well—what news to-night? Have you at last succeeded? Fools that you were, with the quarry full in view, to let the game escape ye?’

“ ‘ My lord, I was not to blame—I think the foul fiend saved him—and assuredly nothing

but the devil could have stood his friend last night !

“ ‘ Hell and furies ! is he not captured ?’

“ ‘ The man merely shook his head.

“ ‘ Go on, fellow ! By Heaven, you madden me !—go on.’

“ ‘ My lord,’ said the Chevalier, ‘ ladies are present—and—’

“ ‘ Know nothing of what we are talking of at present,’ was the reply.

“ The stranger, who was wrapped in a loose riding-coat, with an oilskin-covered hat, had the appearance of a drover, and at first I did not recognize him—but when he spoke, the remarkable tones of his voice brought him instantly to my recollection, and I recognized him as one of the men who had pursued my lover, and questioned Susan and me upon the cliff on the evening the Ranger had escaped. On his entrance I was about to retire, but my curiosity was powerfully excited now, and I kept my seat at the table.

“ ‘ My lord,’ the stranger continued, ‘ since

the evening we lost him among the cliffs, night and day we have continued our search, and every place where he could obtain a shelter has been visited. One trace only could we find—and, strange as it may appear, a man who answered the description of the Ranger most accurately was seen but three evenings since, at the very spot where he seemed to vanish when we chased him! He was observed conversing with two women—and so convinced was I that I had recovered the lost scent again, that since daybreak I and my companions have been hiding in the rocks. No wonder that we watched in vain—for the Ranger was twenty miles away.'

" 'Ha! have you then found out his retreat?' inquired the Earl, passionately.

" 'Yes, my lord—but too late to profit by the discovery.'

" The Earl growled a curse between his teeth, and the stranger thus continued :

" 'That my information was correct circumstances have convinced me. When we

lost him at the Dutchman's Cove—as the country people call that opening to the sea-beach—I overtook two girls at the very place, and questioned them whether they had seen anything of the Ranger? One appeared frightened, and remained silent—but the other denied that any one had passed. They were both pretty—and when I heard that the Ranger had been seen again, and in company with two females, I at once concluded that love had brought him here. Well—'

“ The stranger paused.

“ ‘ Go on ! ’ exclaimed the Earl, angrily.

“ ‘ Never was man more mistaken in his conjectures. Last night, with a dozen desperadoes like himself, he broke into the county prison—overpowered the keepers—liberated and carried off the men whose capture caused us such incessant trouble—and was seen to embark—board a lugger waiting for him—and—’

“ ‘ Has escaped, and with his companions

too!' exclaimed the Earl, in a voice of thunder.

" ' Too true, my lord. He's once more on the water, and free as any sea-bird that breasts the wave !'

" I had listened with breathless anxiety to every syllable that passed the stranger's lips—and during his short narrative my heart had throbbed almost to bursting. But when he announced that my lover had escaped—when I was assured that the hazardous trial, of which I had been apprized, was over—that his adventurous attempt had succeeded, and that the Ranger was at liberty—unable to control the impulse, I uttered an exclamation of delight, fainted, and fell into the arms of Carlotta !

" Nothing could surpass, as I was afterwards informed, the confusion my exclamation and fainting fit occasioned. I was carried from the parlour to my own apartment ; and while Susan and madame's confidante used the customary means to recover

me, the 'most admired disorder' pervaded the company assembled in the dining-room. All were astounded—but the Earl's rage was not to be described.

" 'What means all this?' he exclaimed fiercely, turning a look, in which rage and suspicion were united, upon the pale countenance of the lady hostess. 'Pauline! you have betrayed your trust.'

" 'Not I, by Heaven!' was the reply. 'If aught has occurred, it is without my knowledge altogether—I cannot even comprehend it.'

" 'But I can easily,' returned the Earl. 'She who should have been secluded from the world, as I had been led to believe, was allowed to roam where she pleased, and make acquaintance with the last person living to whom she should have been introduced.'

" 'It is a singular and mysterious occurrence altogether,' observed the Chevalier. 'Was the young lady whom you saw carried from the room just now one of the females

you met upon the cliff when the Ranger evaded your pursuit?" he continued, addressing himself to the stranger.

" 'I cannot pretend to say she was.'

" 'Retire, my friend,' said the Earl; 'you need refreshment, and we will converse presently again.'

" The order was obeyed—the door carefully secured—and the secret conclave resumed their deliberations; and, as it turned out, my unguarded exclamation hurried an unfortunate destiny to its crisis.

CHAPTER XV.

SECRET REVELATIONS.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claudio. No.

Leonato. To be married to her, friar; you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this Count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls to utter it.

Claudio. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, Count?

Leonato. I dare make his answer, none.

Much Ado about Nothing.

“When the stranger disappeared, the Earl paced the room for several minutes, and the deep silence which ensued contrasted singularly with the uproar and confusion

which my fainting fit had so recently occasioned. Suddenly my guardian stopped in front of the lady of the mansion, and, as he addressed her, the low, stern intonation of his voice, and the paleness of his countenance, betrayed the high excitement under which he evidently was labouring, and which he vainly endeavoured to conceal.

“ ‘ Pauline !’ he said, directing a searching glance at Madame d’Arville, ‘ you have neglected the trust reposed in you. To another I would have said that she had betrayed it—but that you *dare not* do. Will you at least favour me with the particulars of this disagreeable occurrence—the introduction of my ward to my worst enemy?’

“ The lady with difficulty had contained herself—for the cold, contemptuous manner of the Earl had stung her to the soul—and her reply was merely a reiteration of surprise, intermingled with numerous appeals to the Virgin and the saints, without any information, however, that could remove suspicion,

or render the occurrence less incomprehensible to all assembled than it had been before.

“ ‘My lord,’ observed the Chevalier, when the lady paused to recover breath, ‘it is quite evident that the affair is wrapped in a mystery not at present to be penetrated. I, to whom some matters are known, of which madame and D’Arlincourt are ignorant, feel, in common with your lordship, what important consequences may arise from this most untoward transaction. Still it is mere suspicion, after all—and the sudden excitement of the girl may have arisen from causes very foreign from those to which at present we attribute it. But, looking to the business in its worst light, and admitting that there is good foundation for apprehension, the danger may be remedied, and your fears, my lord, be put to rest for ever.’

“The Earl listened attentively, and, as the speaker proceeded, marked by assenting nods that he approved of what fell from the Chevalier.

“‘Go on, De Bomont,’ he replied; ‘you have the only cool head in the company. This infernal affair has chased my temper overmuch; madame’s wits appear to have gone astray; while, to guess from her adjuration of the saints, I may compliment her much on her piety and little on her circumspection.’

“The Earl’s sneer was answered by a scornful glance, which seemed to pass disregarded, and he thus continued,

“‘Before we decide on what plans are to be adopted, I should wish to have some private conversation with my friend here. Would you, Monsieur d’Arlincourt, attend madame to her boudoir, whither, in a short time, the Chevalier and I will find our way?’

“The Count obeyed the Earl’s request, and led the lady from the supper-room, who seemed by no means flattered with being excluded from the secret conference. Not so d’Arlincourt—it afforded him an opportunity to converse alone with Madame d’Arville,

which he particularly desired; and when the door was closed, he threw himself upon the sofa beside the lady of the house, and took her hand in his.

“ ‘ Pauline,’ he said, ‘ how fortunate is this *tête-à-tête*—moments are precious—and while opportunity permits, attend to him who has ever been your friend—’

“ ‘ And why not add *lover* too?’

“ ‘ Nay, Pauline, this is no time for idle fooling,’ returned the Count.

“ ‘ Idle, indeed,’ observed the lady, ‘ if aught involving d’Arlincourt’s attachments is to be discussed.’

“ ‘ Hear me, Pauline; it is useless to speak of the past, while, at the present moment, if there be planetary influences in men’s fortunes, my star is overcharged with all that argues evil. But one thing can avert the danger, and that is to carry instantly into effect the marriage scheme which brings us here.’

“ ‘ What! Will not one wife suffice Count d’Arlincourt?’ replied the lady, with a sneer.

“ ‘ How now, Pauline? What mean you? What wife?’

“ ‘ She, for whom your mistress was abandoned—Carlotta.’

“ ‘ Then am I betrayed to—?’

“ ‘ One who will take no advantage of the discovery,’ returned the hostess. ‘ No—when, in her fury last night, as I communicated the Earl’s intentions respecting his ward and you, she stormed like a fiend, announced herself your wife, and swore that even to death she would maintain her claim, while I despised the weakness which left you at the mercy of such a woman—anger changed to pity—and—I forgave you.’

“ ‘ Oh, Pauline! none had ever cause to curse his folly as I have had. In one brief month I felt the wretched thrall in which I stood—a year, and we were separated—and, as I then hoped and believed, never to meet again. Little did I suppose when I heard that you and Carlotta were in England, and, associated by a singular freak of fortune, that

I should be placed dependent on the kindness of one I loved and had neglected—but worse far—thrown upon the mercy of a fiend I had made a wife.'

" 'And which tender relationship, if there be truth in woman, will on her part be rigidly maintained. What mean you to do?'

" 'See her to-night—reason with her—show her the folly of continuing a union, where mutual hatred are the fruits—point the advantages which wealth will confer on me, and—'

" 'Through revenge she will tell you that, though the golden apple be actually within your reach, a touch of hers shall wither your arm before it can grasp the treasure.'

" 'Is she then so determined?'

" 'In that resolve, inflexible.'

" 'But she cannot effect it, Pauline—the Earl is no fool, and the Earl is in my power. How stand you with his lordship? Are those who were lovers in Palermo, in cold England merely friends?'

“ ‘The past might give me reason to distrust you, d’Arlincourt; but no partial confidence will answer now. If there be a man on earth I hate, that being is the Earl. What did he find me? A woman followed by the crowd—idolised by a husband—high in position, affluent, admired—all these I lost through him—and yet I was scarcely in his power, before a dark-browed peasant girl supplanted me. Far from friends and country, no alternative was left but submission—here have I been latterly cooped-up, the slave of him who once knelt at my feet—a puppet at his beck—the mere agent of his infamy. Will the splendour of her prison reconcile the captive to her thralldom? Will the linnet endure the cage because the wires are gilded? No, d’Arlincourt, the chain which binds you to Carlotta is not more galling than that which fetters me to a man whom in heart I abhor. Marked you his contemptuous bearing? the sneer with which his lip curled, as he addressed me in your presence this evening?’ ”

“ ‘ Indeed, Pauline, I did observe how disrespectful was his manner. But this is mere woman’s jealousy. Would you give up the Earl’s protection?’

“ ‘ Had I a shelter for my head, however humble it might be, I would fly from a man who has repaid misplaced affection with insult.’

“ ‘ Then assist me through the difficulty which threatens my present prospect of obtaining the Earl’s ward, and share fortune with me in another land.’

“ ‘ Until another and a fairer rival wins the volatile heart of Monsieur d’Arlincourt, and I become a second time cast upon the world and deserted.’

“ ‘ No, Pauline; never was man’s inconstancy followed by more sincere contrition. But did the Earl ever discover that you and I were aught to each other but mere acquaintances?’

“ ‘ Never; himself in England, he believed that the general report spread by my own emissaries was true, and that, to evade the arm

of justice, I had taken shelter in the convent of the Benedictines—and while the Countess d'Arlincourt was figuring in the gayest circle of the city where she was residing with her fond and constant lover—the self-created Count—the Earl fancied she was mortifying past sins in one of the strictest communities, placed on a bread-and-water regimen, and attired in sackcloth and ashes.'

"Pauline laughed heartily.

" 'And now,' she continued, 'may I inquire for what amiable qualities has the Earl selected you to become the husband, and obtain the fortune of his ward? Probably, he knows not so much of your private history as I do — nor comprehends the process by which Jules Canet, the courier, became Henri d'Arlincourt, the Count. To confer a wife upon a friend is frequently a great convenience to the donor—a fortune accompanying the present, however, makes it rather a more remarkable gift.'

" 'A hurried disclosure, Pauline, of the rela-

tions existing between myself and Lord —— will best explain the reason. The lady I shall receive in full—the fortune but in part.'

“ ‘How so, Jules? Nay, I had forgotten—Henri.’

“ ‘You know the talents I possess, and will not think I make an idle boast, when I say that in every capital in Europe I have played, and never been fairly defeated. The Earl is, as you know, a daring gambler—and last spring his play transactions were extensive, and, as they proved afterwards, unfortunate. Fortune declared heavily against him—his losses impaired his judgment—and, by desperate exertions alone, he managed to meet engagements, which amounted to a frightful figure. The season was nearly over, when a discovery made at Baden obliged me to quit the continent in haste, and seek a temporary shelter in London, until the affair should blow over. It was my first visit to the British capital—and in the higher circles I was entirely unknown. De Bo-

mont and I ran against each other by accident on the second evening of my arrival, and his surprise at meeting me was only exceeded by his delight; for I was the very man then wanted—the only person who could retrieve the tottering fortunes of the Earl. I was immediately taken to Lord ——'s hotel—gave him some specimens of my science—plans were matured—and I was in a day or two introduced to his fortunate associates. None suspected me to be aught but what I had been described—I played among the noblest of gamblers—and in two months won back a large portion of the money previously lost, and again set the Earl upon his legs. Do you wonder now at his being grateful to one who, in the eleventh hour, saved him from ruin all but consummated?

“‘Now, indeed,’ replied Madame d’Arville, ‘I can comprehend the causes which led your noble protector to gift you with a wealthy heiress.’

“‘Probably not all the causes,’ returned

the pseudo Count. 'The Earl generally contrives to keep in the background some secret spring which actuates his motives; and believe me that, in the present instance, my dear Pauline, he has not deviated from his usual course.'

" 'Explain yourself, Monsieur Henri.'

" 'Heavy losses were to be met—money was therefore indispensable—and where was it to be obtained? Not a tree was standing, which dared be felled—and the Earl's son, with a prudence and determination not to be overcome, refused every entreaty and artifice employed by his affectionate father to induce him to open the estate. De Bomont, in this emergency, reminded the hard-pressed nobleman that his ward's property was funded, and by some little ingenuity might be rendered immediately available. It would benefit the orphan too. The country only paid her three per cent., and the Earl would make it *four*. The plan was carried out—a signature or two were forged—and Miss Meadows'

fortune of £50,000 has crumbled down to exactly a tithe of the original! Do you comprehend me, Pauline?"

" "Why, yes, but still imperfectly. The Earl has disposed of the fortune of his ward—"

" "And has neither wish nor present ability to replace it."

" "I am all attention—proceed."

" "Well, de Bomont has hit on a method of abridging his lordship's guardianship of a pretty girl, and cancelling a large debt at the same time—two important matters, you will allow. I wed the lady with £5000, and the Earl will be relieved of a debt of five-and-forty!"

" "Ha!—I understand the business now correctly—and you consent?"

" "Why, yes."

" "And accept £5000 only?"

" "Certainly, Pauline. But it is to make that money a more rapid means of enforcing the other forty-five."

" "By Heaven! D'Arlincourt, I could

worship you: Do these island laws afford the means of reaching a delinquent like my Lord?

“ ‘ Ay, my dear madame, provided the injured is in a position to set the law's machinery in action. My Lord's most munificent five thousand will oblige him to disgorge the other five-and-forty. And now that we understand each other, will you heartily assist me ?’

“ ‘ And will you a second time deceive ?’

“ ‘ Never—by every hope of happiness. Never—by this kiss.’

“ ‘ Ha! steps on the lobby,’ said Pauline, in a whisper. ‘ My Lord Earl—what an absence! Another moment and I should have slept — I cannot compliment the Count's agreeability to-night. The fogs of England have infected him.’ Then, turning to D'Arlincourt, she drawled out, ‘ Pray, M. le Compte, what were you last speaking of?’

“ ‘ Pauline,’ said the Earl, ‘ we have much to speak about to-morrow. Ring for some

wine. This room is quiet? No eaves-droppers?" The lady bowed an affirmative. 'Ha!—all well—and now, madame, we wish you a sound repose.'

"Nothing could have pained a woman, once flattered and followed by admirers, more sensibly than the cold civility with which the Earl intimated that her absence was desirable. She rose instantly—bade the Earl a good-night—bowed formally to the Chevalier—and, when she reached the door, and caught the eye of D'Arlincourt, her look spoke volumes.

"What had passed between the Earl and his dependant, the Chevalier, in the supper-room, I know not—but, for the detail of the *tête-à-tête* which occurred in Madame D'Arville's boudoir, I was indebted, afterwards, to the last person upon earth, from whom I could have expected either sympathy or information.

"From my recent illness in the parlour, Susan's stay with me was kindly protracted;

and we were sitting at the fire, conjecturing a thousand causes for the Earl's visit, and wondering whether the Ranger would redeem his promise and return, when a tap was heard at the bed-room door, and Carlotta entered. At that late hour, from her a visit was most unusual, and the appearance of Madame D'Arville's favourite was absolutely startling. The expression of her face betrayed the stormy workings of her mind too plainly—cheeks and lips were colourless, her hair partially disordered, and the wildness of her brilliant eyes had all the frenzied excitement of madness in their lightning glances. She seemed at first displeased to find Susan in the chamber.

“ ‘What, not abed yet!’ she exclaimed.

“ ‘No,’ returned the young attendant.
‘So soon after her sudden indisposition, I did not think it proper to leave Miss Meadows by herself.’

“ ‘You are right, girl,’ was the reply.
‘I come from my most amiable mistress, and

your all-accomplished *gouvernante*, mademoiselle, to make affectionate inquiries after your health. I shall report favourably, and thus relieve the more than maternal anxiety of Madame d'Arville for her pupil's health.'

" Nothing could surpass the sarcastic tone, or the contempt which the curling lip of the lady's *femme de chambre* conveyed, as she delivered madame's formal message. When retiring, my eyes involuntarily followed her as she was leaving the apartment. Pausing in the doorway, with a meaning look, and a slight movement of her finger, she intimated that she would speak with me, and I obeyed the summons.

" ' Do not undress—dismiss your attendant—and expect me in half-an-hour. Neglect this opportunity—and—you are ruined !'

" The emphatic whisper in which the last sentence was delivered had on me the effect that was intended—and when I returned and sat down beside Susan at the fire, my agitation did not escape her observation. She

asked me what Carlotta said, and I repeated it—our girlish conference was brief—and it terminated in Susan retiring to her own room, and my awaiting the promised interview.

“ Before the stated period had elapsed, my expected visitor entered the chamber.

“ ‘ You have attended to my request—’tis well—I will speak to you as I would not in the presence of another.’

“ I motioned her to take a chair.

“ ‘ No, lady, there is no time for delay—one question answered, and I attend you. You know, doubtless, what all within the château are well acquainted with—the object of the Earl’s visit ?’

“ ‘ I have heard from Madame d’Arville enough to excite my astonishment—I may use stronger language—my disgust.’

“ ‘ Is the Count then an object of indifference—and are you disinclined to enter on a matrimonial engagement with one selected by your guardian? Answer my question with sincerity.’

“ ‘ D’Arlincourt to me is not an object of indifference, but aversion — and no human control will I acknowledge or obey, which would force me to a union from which every feeling of my heart revolts. You know now my sentiments, and, young as I am, no earthly power shall shake them. Go, Carlotta, and tell your mistress—ay, I will not falter—my heart is another’s—my hand my own.’ ”

“ While I spoke, I thought on my last parting with the Ranger ; and the scene in which our faith was mutually interchanged vividly returned. My brow reddened—my eye flashed—in the girl’s face a woman’s firm determination was imprinted—and Carlotta read it correctly.

“ ‘ Enough, lady ! ’ she exclaimed ; ‘ what changes in my feelings towards you a single day has wrought ! I awoke your determined enemy—I shall sleep, if a mind agonised as mine can find a temporary forgetfulness, with a prayer for your deliverance. A prayer—and from me ! Bah ! That, indeed, were mockery.

But no more. Come with me—and yet I half fear to trust you. This evening your girlish folly betrayed a secret that none before suspected. One rash exclamation now—you are lost—and though I may pity, I shall want the power to assist you. Can you, like me, listen when every sentence uttered stabs to the very soul, and yet hold your breath? If you can—come, and learn from those who direct your future destiny, what that destiny shall be.'

" ' This evening, Carlotta, I was surprised—to-night I am prepared. Trust me, without warmer feelings to influence me, this dreaded union with a man I loathe will render me firm and prudent as yourself.'

" ' Then follow boldly, and the means devised for love shall serve the purposes of hate. Little did Pauline suspect that when she discovered the means of affording the secret *entré* to her boudoir to the minion she favoured for the time, that plan contrived to deceive others in turn should deceive herself. Well,

more of that again. Follow me. Every mansion has its secrets, and the château is no exception,' she said, and led the way.

"On the first landing-place, we turned into a narrow passage which branched from the principal corridor, and, as I had heard from Susan, led to apartments occupied by the domestics. The third door she opened, and, when we were within, bolted it carefully, and unclosed a small lantern. The hour—the air of mystery—the perilous position in which I stood myself—all gave exciting interest to an adventure, such as I had read of in romances, but hitherto had considered as unreal; and yet in the chamber there was nothing but of the commonest description—a plain sleeping-room, as plainly furnished—and, from appearances, not occupied for some time.

" ' Know you where you are ? ' inquired my companion, in a whisper.

" ' In an apartment, I should guess, belonging to one of the servants of the château. '

" ' Once it was what you describe—but, by

the ingenuity of my Lord's valet and my exemplary mistress, it has become a very important chamber indeed. Hist! We are now within a dozen paces of those whom in this world *you* have most cause to fear, and *I* to detest. Come!—my lady's closet!—you have oftentimes been useful to the mistress, and for a second time to-night shall do good service to the maid!

“ She said, and advanced to a press, unclosed the door, and nothing appeared but empty shelves within.

“ ‘ Be silent now, not a whisper—I will direct you.’

“ Her hand unclosed some secret fastening. The shelves receded—we stepped into a closet, and, but for its size and darkness, might have imagined that we had quitted solitude for society.

“ Carlotta closed the door by which we entered—placed her hand upon my arm, and gave it a monitory pressure. The transition of a moment was singular—voices imme-

diately beside us spoke plainly as if we were actually in the room—while, leading me to a side of the closet opposite that by which we had gained entrance, Carlotta masked the lantern, and, through two openings, which an ill-fitted door afforded, we saw and heard all that had passed within as distinctly as if we had been seated at the table.

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE — THE RANGER'S RETURN —
A FALSE ALARM.

Juliet. How cam'st thou hither, tell me ? and wherefore ?
The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb ;
And the place death, considering who thou art ;
If any of my kinsmen find thee here—

Romeo. With love's light wings did I o'erperch these
walls :

For stony limits cannot hold love out :
For what love can do, that dares love attempt ;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

Juliet. If they do see thee, they will murder thee—

“ I need scarcely say that the Earl, his friend the Chevalier, and the man destined to become my husband, comprised the party. After Madame's departure, the delicacy of her boudoir had not been respected, for several bottles were placed upon the table. De Bo-

mont was perfectly collected, but both the Earl and the Count were evidently under the influence of wine. From the accidental grouping of the party, and the disposition of the lights, every change of feature of those within was revealed to the eye, and the ear caught every syllable that passed between them, even had they spoke in whispers. At the moment, however, when we became listeners, from the high and hurried tones in which they were conversing, the Earl and his guest appeared to be mutually displeased.

“ ‘ And, pray, my lord, everything considered, why am I not entitled to inquire what meant the affair of this evening ?’ demanded d’Arlincourt. ‘ Who is this fellow whose news disturbed your lordship so marvellously ?—he whom you call the Ranger — and what connexion has he with my wife elect ?’

“ ‘ Just,’ returned the Chevalier, in a cold and angry tone, ‘ by the same right that we waive a privilege of inquiry into any particulars regarding a wife elected, Monsieur le

Comte,'—and De Bomont's sarcastic tone in pronouncing the title was not to be mistaken. 'Explanation on one side might be inconvenient probably, as on the other.'

“ ‘Bah!’ said the Earl, as he waved his hand impatiently, ‘all this is to no purpose. If M. d’Arlincourt’s play was as shallow as his diplomacy, a juggler in a country fair would leave him pennyless. I shall make a brief summary of matters as they stand. Here is the lady—with her, five thousand pounds—of course, a private marriage—off to the continent—no public inquiry—no trouble—and yet the Count’—the Earl’s eye turned ironically on d’Arlincourt—‘talks of a public ceremony. Bans, forsooth—why not a special licence to give it greater *éclat*? Were other nuptial contracts as formally performed? If they were, Count, and report might be credited, you are already helpmated.’

“ ‘My lord, under this subterfuge would you elude the conditions of our agreement?’

“ ‘And will you presume, sir, to demand

that I should countenance the mockery of a public ceremonial, when under this very roof a wife is already resident?"

" 'Tis false—I know to whom your allusion points—to Carlotta—once my mistress, I admit. Pardon me, my lord, but were all the claimants to be Countesses in right of the Earldom of—to appear, think you this room would afford accommodation for so numerous a party?"

" 'Scoundrel!' exclaimed the Earl furiously, 'you grow impertinent.'

" 'And yet that scoundrel saved a greater—'

" The Earl sprang from his chair, his eyes flashing with rage.

" 'Nay, my good lord,' observed d'Arlincourt, with a sneer, 'the sentence was unfinished—I would have added 'man,' had you but been patient.'

" The Chevalier had laid his hand upon the Earl's arm, and by looks endeavoured to urge him to restrain the furious outbreak

which the sarcastic language of the Count appeared too likely to occasion.

“ ‘ My lord,’ he said, ‘ control your temper. Angry discussions are now worse than useless. And you, Monsieur d’Arlincourt, recollect that no matter what intimacy recent transactions may have produced, you are in the presence of a superior, with whom it ill becomes you to bandy words. What would you have? An idle parade of a most silly ceremony—one totally unrequired—one not to be effected without risking a publicity, which may compromise the safety of all concerned—one which former engagements preclude you from entering into—nugatory on that account in law—and, in this country, subjecting you to criminal prosecution.’

“ ‘ All these considerations are for me to weigh,’ exclaimed d’Arlincourt, impatiently. ‘ I alone am exposed to the consequences which might possibly arise, and I will risk them.’

“ ‘ Nay,’ returned De Bomont, ‘ surely if his lordship consents to take the shadow for

the substance, it should methinks content you. If you are so chary, Count, rest assured the Earl would experience little difficulty in finding those quite ready to receive a pretty girl and five thousand pounds, with or without the benison of monk or parson. But why waste words? D'Arlincourt, *you cannot marry*. Carlotta—nay, brave it not—I speak it of my own knowledge, is your wife—by law, by your own acknowledgment, your wife !

“ ‘ ’Tis false, by Heaven !’ exclaimed the Count. ‘ I called her so—purposes required it—’twas nothing but a passing folly. No, no, I soon surfeited of matrimony. Pshaw ! don’t name a woman I detest !’

“ Carlotta, while this singular scene was passing, had kept her hand upon my arm. During the conversation which we overheard, from time to time, the pressure of her fingers called my attention to what was being revealed, or marked her own impatience ; but the last sentences uttered by the Count appeared to excite her almost to madness. The

grasp of her fingers became painful, and with lips close to my ear, she whispered, 'False villain! thy hate is faithfully returned!'

" 'But why prolong an idle discussion?' observed the Chevalier. 'Did my lord consent, Monsieur d'Arlincourt, to your absurd demands, you could be no nearer the altar than you are at present, even although you had never paid it a formal visit before. I run no risk by a slight disclosure of wounding your sensibility—for you care nothing for your bride elect more than you do for that Madonna which rests against the wall.'

" 'I fear,' replied the Count, 'that my answer will raise a smile. You may, however, credit me or not, precisely as you please. From the moment I saw the girl, she caught my fancy, and now I am actually in love with her.'

" The tense pressure of Carlotta's fingers, with an ironical 'Indeed!' from the Earl, and a laugh from the Chevalier, followed d'Arlincourt's declaration.

“ ‘ Alas ! M. le Comte,’ observed the latter, ‘ permit me to offer you my sympathy. Your too tender heart no doubt would bleed when I inform you, that the lady has already taken the liberty of falling in love with another.’

“ ‘ No matter. The seas shall divide her from her admirer, after at the altar she has given me a husband’s rights.’

“ ‘ But will she go there?’ said the Chevalier, with a meaning smile.

“ ‘ Yes,’ returned the Count. ‘ If entreaty will not avail, a little gentle force shall effect it.’

“ ‘ No, d’Arlincourt,’ replied the Chevalier, ‘ build nothing upon that foundation, or your edifice will crumble. You are not in Italy, but England. The land is what it boasts to be—the home of freedom—no compulsion will do here—the humblest peasant girl is under the same protection with a peeress; and a prince of the blood dare not violate the sanctity of a cottage home. Come, for the night let us adjourn our conference; and I have no doubt that, on cool reflection, you

will see the impolicy of pressing the point at issue farther.'

" ' I am prepared, Monsieur d'Arlincourt, to bestow upon you the lady and the promised dower ; but it shall be in the manner I have sufficiently explained,' observed the Earl, as he moved towards the door.

" ' And I, my lord,' returned the Count, ' will expect your pledge to be fulfilled, and, let me add, with legal formalities, of which one scintilla shall not be omitted.'

" The only answer the Earl vouchsafed was in a contemptuous scowl. Both, without further remark, quitted the room—the Chevalier followed, the secret council closed, and Madame d'Arville's boudoir was deserted.

" Carlotta unclosed the lantern, and its feeble light fell upon a face convulsed by passion, which, from previous restraint, broke out with frightful violence. Curses on her lover's perjury were intermingled with vows of desperate vengeance, while oaths that made me shudder issued from trembling

lips colourless as those of a tenant of the grave.

“ ‘ Carlotta,’ I whispered, ‘ be calm.’ ”

“ ‘ Calm !’ she repeated, and her eyes flashed with rage, ‘ tell the lioness robbed of her cub to restrain her fury—then tell the woman who has loved, and trusted, and been deceived as I have—tell her to forget her wrongs and forego her vengeance. D’Arlincourt, I once doted on thee to distraction—with equal intensity do I hate thee now ! But no more—I will accompany you to your chamber—follow me, lady.’ ”

“ When we reached the great corridor, Carlotta pointed out my apartment, and left me with an intimation that she would presently return. Her absence was but short, and, after bolting the door, she placed a flask and glasses on the table. I did not decline the wine she offered me, for I found myself labouring under a nervous agitation, which no effort could remove ; but my temperate appeal to the flask formed a very striking contrast to the deep draught in which my companion

indulged. It seemed, however, to have the effect desired, for she became more composed, and the convulsive motion of her lips in a few minutes subsided altogether.

“ ‘ I have made a hurried circuit of the château, and all have retired to their respective chambers. Lights from the windows of De Bomont and the Count tell that the occupants are safe within. I overheard the Earl conversing with his valet, and Madame d'Arville is long since in bed. Pray, lady, will you entrust me with your confidence?—it may enable me to serve you more effectually.’

“ The disclosures of that evening had betrayed the fact of my having a secret attachment, and the strange revelations which succeeded gave full assurance that in the fidelity of Carlotta every reliance might be placed. Her friendship might be eminently important, and I considered that the best mode of obtaining her sympathy would be by making her my confidante and adviser; and in this conviction, every particular regarding my

meeting with the Ranger, and all that subsequently occurred, were faithfully detailed. Her astonishment how these repeated interviews in the cliffs not only eluded discovery, but escaped suspicion altogether, was unbounded ; for, as she confessed, ever since I had become an inmate of the château, by my guardian's orders, I had been under constant *espionnage*, and even the few letters which I had written or received had all been read and resealed before they were allowed to reach my hand, or be transmitted through the post.

“ ‘ And wherefore, Carlotta, was all this trouble necessary ; and what was dreaded from a wretched orphan like myself ? ’ ”

“ ‘ The conversation you overheard to-night is sufficiently explanatory of the Earl's reasons for secluding from the world a helpless girl whom he had so infamously defrauded. Heaven be praised ! the villain's precautions were unavailing. But men are all plunderers alike. Is not the fond affection of woman

dearer to her far than the dross the miser worships? and what is the business of his life, and the proudest boast of the profligate? Ay, whether he be prince or peasant, 'tis the same—why, that he has wormed himself into the heart of too-confiding woman—triumphed over her weakness—degraded her first, and abandoned her afterwards.'

"Tenderer recollections for a time appeared to have lulled the tempest of jealousy and revenge, which had torn the bosom of the *roué's* deserted mistress; and eyes, just now flashing with rage, melted into tears, and showed that, in her altered nature, still a portion of the woman remained.

"I took her hand in mine, and endeavoured to console her.

" 'Alas, Carlotta, I fear you have undergone many a painful vicissitude.'

" 'Heaven forefend, lady, that you should experience a hundredth portion of the misery that I have already undergone, and, my heart whispers, still must undergo!'

“ ‘ Would you entrust me with your history, Carlotta?’

“ ‘ My history!’ she almost screamed. ‘ Girl! you know not what you ask. Reveal the past transactions of a life like mine! Oh no, no—there are passages in my career of guilt and misery I dare not breathe—nay, dare not think upon.’

“ She buried her face in her hands and sobbed convulsively. I gave her wine—she partially recovered—the violence of her grief abated; but every deep-drawn sigh seemed to come directly from a breaking heart.

“ ‘ Well, mademoiselle, I will tell you my story—at least so much of it as you may listen to. I was once innocent as yourself, and vice was known to me but by name. Oh God! why did I not die when my thoughts were uncorrupted, and my name unsullied by a crime?’

“ The remembrance of what she had been

forcibly returned—all the excitement of anger was gone, and a countenance on which

Years of guilt and of disguise
Had steel'd the brow and armed the eyes,

had assumed an humbled character, which gave its beauty an interest I could never have believed it to possess.

“ ‘ Well, Miss Mary, I feel that, in unloading a bosom to one like you, I shall have a listener who will feel pity for failings she cannot forgive—and all of Carlotta's history that dare be told, you shall learn from her own lips—but, Holy Virgin! did not something strike against the casement ?’

“ ‘ I fancied certainly,’ I whispered, ‘ that I heard a gentle tap upon the glass.’

“ ‘ Ah! ’tis fancy, after all—some beetle attracted by the light, for now I perceive the shutters were not closed—that matters not—the window looks out on the garden. Ha! by every saint, another and a more distinct sound—I'll see what it means.’

“ She said, rose, and approached the case-ment, while I half fainted, and fell back, unable to rise from the chair.

“ ‘ Extinguish the candles,’ said Carlotta.

“ The order was obeyed, and my companion raised the window.

“ ‘ Mary!’ said a voice without.

“ ‘ Who speaks?’

“ ‘ I—dear Susan,’ was replied.

“ ‘ Ha!—who are you?’

“ ‘ I am hoarse—know you not the tones of your old friend of the cliffs, fair Susan?’

“ ‘ Ha!—speak—who—?’

“ ‘ Dull girl! Will, the Ranger!’

“ I sprang forward, but Carlotta seized my arm, and implored me to be quiet.

“ ‘ What brings you here at this late hour? Know you that the house is full? Surely you can fancy the consequences of detection?’

“ ‘ All these I know; but where is Mary? This is her chamber, and yet a strange voice addresses me. You are not Susan?’

“ ‘ No, not Susan—but one as faithful to

the full. Nay, start not, here stands my surety.'

"As she spoke, she led me to the open casement. There was no moon, but the night was clear and starry—I looked out, and beneath, a man was standing—but the shadow of the building and a dark cloak which wrapped his figure entirely concealed it.

"‘It may be a plot,’ said Carlotta, in a whisper; ‘speak softly to him, and the answer will decide the doubt.’

"‘William, have you indeed returned?’

"‘My own sweet Mary’s voice,’ exclaimed the stranger. ‘Ay, love, in one enterprise the Ranger has succeeded, and a dearer one remains to be achieved.’

"‘Oh, know you, William, what you peril? Every room in the château, with one exception, harbours an enemy.’

"‘Well, well, no matter. Who stands beside you?’

"‘One,’ returned Carlotta, ‘heart and soul faithfully devoted to an injured orphan.’

“ ‘ Speak freely, Ranger—she who listens, with a woman’s form possesses a heart fearless as your own.’

“ ‘ May I confide, Mary, in your friend?’

“ ‘ Oh, yes—my life upon her attachment. Were you away, all I should have to cling to would be Carlotta.’

“ ‘ Carlotta—ha! the minion of Pauline d’Arville, the mistress of the scoundrel d’Arlecourt—Mary, you are betrayed.’

“ ‘ No, no,’ returned my companion; ‘ the minion of Pauline this night has discovered more of female worthlessness than she ever knew before, and the mistress of Jules Canet would calmly look upon the scaffold, when the knife descended on as blackhearted a criminal as ever expiated a life of guilt.’

“ ‘ I am satisfied, Carlotta; and now for a brief detail, Mary, of what occurred since we separated. I won’t detain you with my successful effort in delivering men condemned for a crime of which they were altogether inno-

cent. I escaped, by your means, the detection which would have ended in death—here am I, unsuspected—my enemies think me divided from them by a sea—and on that false impression rests my full security.'

“ ‘ But are you not unsafe, William, should the Earl and his friends become alarmed ?’

“ ‘ I have two or three companions without the garden-wall, who would make short work, though in the Count and Chevalier it deprived the world of two of its brightest ornaments, and in the peerage made a trifling change, and gave the old Earldom of —— a new successor.’

“ ‘ What brings you here, William ?’

“ ‘ To claim,’ returned the Ranger, ‘ a bride—or, if she has repented a hurried engagement, free her from a rash promise, and bid her a last farewell.’

“ ‘ No, William—would I were beside thee, and my faith should again be plighted.’

“ ‘ And will you fly with me ?’ inquired

the Ranger, passionately. '*Me*—known but by evil report—a man of desperate fortunes—banned, outlawed—'

“ ‘Yes, yes—willingly will I share your fortunes.’

“ ‘Ah, Mary! would I were near thee to hold thee to my heart, and speak my gratitude. Attend—danger is around—my deadliest enemies rest quietly not fifty paces from the spot where he, for whose life they would pay tenfold its worthless value, stands securely on this green sward as on the deck of his own lugger.’

“ ‘What are your plans, Ranger?’ inquired my companion. ‘To be successful they must be promptly effected, or in four-and-twenty hours your mistress will be forced to the altar, and the mockery of marriage place her in the power of—’

“ ‘Whom?’ inquired the Ranger, sharply.

“ ‘Jules Canet, the ex-courier; or, if it please you, Henri, Count d’Arlincourt,’ was the reply.

“ ‘Then count or courier,’ returned the rover, with a calm determination which gave assurance that his was no idle threat, ‘if your skin be pervious to lead or steel, look sharp, or I’ll interrupt the ceremony. Will you fly with me to-morrow night? Can you but manage to reach the garden, and every obstacle to escape will be overcome?’

“ ‘That I will effect,’ said my companion. ‘What hour, Ranger, shall we expect you?’

“ ‘At twelve, precisely—’

“ ‘And where?’

“ ‘Know you the harbour which terminates the green alley which opens on the heath?’

“ ‘Perfectly.’

“ ‘There shall I await you — and now, Mary—’

“ Ere the sentence was completed, a loud explosion in the direction of the spot the Ranger named, was heard.

“ ‘Ha !—a shot. No signal that of mine. I must be off. Fear nothing, love! To-morrow night I’ll win my promised bride—ay,

by Heaven! though I send half-a-score of scoundrels to their account, and lay this house in ashes.'

"He spoke and disappeared.

" 'Hark!' exclaimed Carlotta, 'the alarm spreads'—for another report of fire-arms immediately beside us followed. 'You will be the first object of suspicion—secure your door—undress. The part of one disturbed from sleep is easily enacted—your replies are plain—those of one startled from sound repose, by an alarm of which she knows nothing. I'll ascertain its cause and extent.'

"Carlotta bounded down the passage, and I followed her directions. While undressing, I heard doors slam—steps hurry up and down the corridor—questionings and reply—all that could indicate a general confusion. Persons approached my chamber—lights flared through the keyhole, and a voice—which I recognized to be the Earl's—exclaimed:

" 'See to the lady! What, ho!—Pauline!

—Carlotta! Curse on these loitering fools! Were the house burning, I firmly believe they would tarry to arrange their head-dress.'

" 'I beg to differ from your lordship,' exclaimed a voice I knew to be Carlotta's. 'Under such circumstances, the duties of the toilet should be postponed.'

" 'Where sleeps my ward?' demanded the Earl, haughtily.

" 'She occupies that chamber,' was the reply.

" 'Is she safe?'

" 'That is easily ascertained. Unless your lordship wishes to make a personal inquiry, I shall request admission.'

" 'Go on—no fooling, woman.'

"Carlotta's knock obtained admission instantly, and every fear touching my safe custody was removed at once. In a few minutes the inmates of the château had all collected in the corridor with two exceptions—Madame d'Arville and the Count were absent.

"As I looked through the partial opening

of the door, a singular scene met the eye. A dozen half-dressed persons of both sexes, with alarmed countenances, were vainly endeavouring to obtain some information from those beside them—but to those anxious inquiries no answer was vouchsafed. At last, the loud and angry voice of the Earl demanded, ‘Where were the scoundrels who had been directed to patrol the grounds?’ when two men, armed with fowling-pieces, unwillingly came forward.

“One glance at these nocturnal protectors was quite sufficient to satisfy the Earl that in their vigilance no great confidence might be placed. To an angry inquiry of ‘Who discharged these shots? whence came this alarm?’ a stupid stare was returned. What aile had partially done, fear had completely effected.

“‘You drunken villains—which of you caused this confusion?’

“Both muttered a denial of the charge.

“‘I have been through every corner of the

garden, my lord,' said the stout stranger, who, on the preceding evening, had brought the tidings of the Ranger's escape, 'and all is quiet. Ha! I fancy, after all, these shots came not from an enemy;' and he took the gun from the fellow's hand who stood beside him. 'See, my lord, the cock is down—the pan open—this piece, not ten minutes since, has been discharged.

" 'Doubtless,' replied the Earl, 'these drunken swine have occasioned all this uproar. Off to your sties—away—not a word—or, by Heaven! I'll set you in the stocks to-morrow. So, madame, have you at last found your way hither? Whatever may betide your ward, your toilet will not be neglected.—Monsieur d'Arlincourt! had the lady for whom you profess such love needed immediate assistance, your rescue would have been somewhat tardy.'

" Had the truth been known, to the persons charged with indifference, the night *emeute* had been the most alarming. Pauline

and the pseudo Count had been deeply occupied in the lady's dressing-room, devising plans to overreach their guilty confederates. To them the alarm was astounding—and, as the domestics hurried along the passages to and fro, the Count found it inconvenient to issue from his concealment, until the whole had grouped around the Earl and left him a safe egress.

“ All separated in a few minutes. The clock struck three. To a slight tap I unclosed the door, and Carlotta entered.

“ ‘ All ended happily—not a suspicion is abroad—and the alarm of to-night will give more security to your lover's attempt to-morrow. I dare not venture to remain longer. Sleep, dear lady, sleep. If I can rest under the same roof with a wretch—the idol once of love—the object now of hate—I, too, will court repose. Will it come? Will thoughts of the present and the past—no—no—I dare not name the future—will *they* be lost in temporary oblivion? Oh, no! The thoughts by

day give place to nightly visions, and this wretched existence is fevered, valueless, hopeless. One feeling only binds me to life, and I cling to it tenaciously, as the drowning wretch grasps anything which might support him. Name—fame—happiness—hope—all are gone. What then remains? Vengeance!—vengeance!

“ She said—burst from the room—I locked the door—and went to sleep—if sleep consist of mingled visions, in which love and terror were intimately blended.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROPOSAL—A GAMBLER'S FATE.

Thou subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man!
Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,
To be seduced by thy flattery,
That hast deceived so many with thy vows?
Return, and make thy love amends.
For me—by this pale queen of night I swear,
I am so far from granting thy request,
That I despise thee for thy wrongful twit;
And by and by intend to chide myself,
Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

“ While Susan, was assisting me to dress, Carlotta entered my chamber, and inquired, ‘ Had I recovered from the alarm of last night? —You look pale, mademoiselle,’ she continued; ‘ these scenes are new to you. To me such occurrences are not unusual.’

“ I looked at her as she spoke, and the expression of her face told that sleep had been to her a stranger. The eye was lustreless—the features had a disturbed character—and, bold as the spirit was, it could not prevent the care-worn countenance from disclosing the secret of the heart.

“ ‘ Know you, Carlotta, what occasioned last night’s alarm?’

“ ‘ No, lady. The blame, whether right or wrong, has been laid upon the fellows who were left watching in the garden. They steadily deny the charge, but none believe them. Good frequently springs from evil; and, in the present instance, the Ranger to-night will have the garden to himself, for the watch kept there has, by the Earl’s orders, been discontinued. You will be presently summoned to the breakfast-room. Observe what passes, and take care that nothing which may transpire shall hurry you into any display of feeling, which could lead your enemies to suspect that you are not in utter

ignorance not only of all that has passed, but all that is designed. I will come to you when the visitors are otherwise engaged—and the disclosure I was about to make last night shall be freely given when we are safe from interruption.'

"A knock at the door, which Carlotta had secured, announced that Susan had come to attend me.

" ' 'Tis the peasant girl? Is she faithful? Is she discreet?'

" ' Oh yes,' I replied.

" ' Then heart and head may be relied upon?'

" ' I pledge myself for both.'

" ' Susan,' said Carlotta, as she gave her admission, 'I have often heard the rough honesty of an English peasant's attachment boasted. The northern heart is cold—an age is wanted ere it is fired—and love or gratitude alone can warm it to fever heat. Mark how differently the feelings of an Italian are influenced. I loved—only as a southern heart

can love. Its very memory is gone, and I hate—Oh, God! with what intensity! The scoundrel who proved my attachment—who wooed and won, and flung me from him, as a wayward child discards the toy he is weary of—he will again endeavour to blind his former dupe. No, Count d'Arlincourt, your art for once will fail—and she who saved you from the galleys will mar your ambition and wreck your hopes, ay, when they are at the highest, too, Jules Canet!"

"The flush of anger spread over a face hitherto 'pale as the sheeted ghost,' and the dark eye lightened as her secret resolution was remembered. The effect on Susan and myself was similar—and we shuddered to discover how near akin love and hatred may be found.

"When the expected summons came for me to meet my guardian and his guests, the scene I had overheard last night prepared me for what I witnessed on joining the party already assembled in the breakfast-room.

Madame's ease of manner was evidently assumed—to me the Earl's was 'more than kind,' but at the same time forced and unnatural—the Chevalier was thoughtful—and d'Arlincourt's attempts, under the appearance of indifference, to mask the anxiety which the danger of his position caused, were readily penetrated. Each seemed to regard the other with suspicion—all had a separate and a secret game to play—and the deserted orphan, whose sacrifice, in whatever else they differed, was the great object of this infamous confederacy, was probably less disturbed at the coming crisis, than those who had planned, and, as they confidently believed, had rendered her ruin a certainty.

“The morning meal was scarcely ended when the Earl and his friend the Chevalier accepted the invitation of the hostess, and retired to the lady's boudoir. I presume the arrangement was preconcerted, as it left me with d'Arlincourt alone. My aversion to this unprincipled adventurer, strong from the

first moment of our acquaintance, had been confirmed by the disclosures of Carlotta, and the villanous revelations I had overheard the preceding night. The object of being left *tête-à-tête* with the scoundrel was, therefore, easily understood—and, as the Chevalier closed the door, I rose to leave the apartment. D'Arlincourt, however, intercepted my retreat, seized my hand, and begged I would be seated. I peremptorily declined; and, as his entreaties became warmer, my refusals were more decisive. I saw that his cheeks reddened, and the expression of his face evinced that he was equally mortified and surprised at the firmness of manner with which I declined affording an opportunity of private conversation for which he was evidently prepared—and, in a tone of voice which betrayed pique and disappointment, he announced that the interview he sought was with the full permission of my noble guardian.

“ ‘It may be, sir,’ I replied, ‘as you represent it; but, as we are strangers to each

other, you can have nothing to communicate to me in which I am concerned, or could be interested.'

" 'Excuse me, mademoiselle. My object in courting a private interview is important not only to my future happiness but to yours. I am here'—and with an easy assurance, that sent the blood rushing to my brows, the adventurer clasped me round the waist—'I am here to tender you my heart, and to offer you my hand.'

" 'Both which I reject with scorn,' I exclaimed, roused by the insolent familiarity with which he had ventured to address me.

" 'Nay, by Heaven! madame, this girlish coquetry shall not avail. Your hand has been bestowed upon me by your guardian, and no human power shall prevent me from obtaining the promised gift. Come,' he continued with matchless effrontery, 'this kiss shall seal the compact,' and he endeavoured to press his lips to mine.

" I started back, flung his hand from mine,

and, with a spirit I was afterwards surprised at, rebuked his insolence, and threatened to complain to the Earl of the insult he had offered.

“ ‘ Oh,’ he continued with a sneer, and he caught my hand a second time, ‘ surely mademoiselle will scarcely be so cruel. Fair lady, we but trifle—I claim a husband’s rights. Nay, one kiss, lady.’

“ ‘ A husband’s rights ! Insolent ! unhand me instantly !’

“ ‘ Nay, then, a little gentle violence may overcome a lady’s scruples.’

“ As he spoke, he clasped me suddenly in his arms—I recoiled from him and screamed—the door was thrown open, and Carlotta stood on the threshold. To describe the fury and contempt her air and countenance exhibited would be impossible. On d’Arlincourt, one glance from her flashing eyes seemed surcharged with a serpent’s fascination. In a moment his grasp relaxed, and the flush upon his face changed into the paleness

of a statue. Availing myself of recovered liberty, I bounded past Carlotta, and ran down the corridor. For a short time, my rescuer remained stationary in the doorway, her lips motionless, but the lightning glance of her fiery eyes fixed upon the object of her hate. Then, without uttering a word, she closed the door, hurried down the passage, and rejoined me.

“ Carlotta was the first to speak, as in a voice of deep derision she exclaimed with an air of triumphant exultation, ‘ So, my gallant Count, the humble suitor’s is not your style of courtship. God’s mercy ! I fear my interruption was unseasonable. Speak of the grand Turk himself—why he flings not the handkerchief of honour with lordlier bearing to a favoured slave, than Jules Canet intimates his intention of wedding a wealthy bride, and in exchange for her ample dower, the ex-courier will bestow his hand ! Said he not heart, too ? False villain ! But come—

once more my lady's boudoir is occupied—and, though we may not join, we'll take the liberty of listening to the conversation.'

" 'Run we not risk of discovery, Carlotta?'

" 'Not the slightest,' she replied. 'Pauline's character is singular. In trifles she is restless, and the idlest suspicions haunt her. The displacement of a cosmetic would occupy her for a week, until she discovered, or fancied she had—which with her are precisely the same—the daring individual who had infringed upon the sanctity of her toilet. With the purpose for which this secret communication with her boudoir was established, the memory of its existence appears to have fled. Leave Susan here, should you be sought, to answer the inquiry; and we may possibly ascertain more correctly those designs which must be counteracted.'

" Susan was accordingly summoned, — received instructions from Carlotta; and we then proceeded to the secret closet, which the

night before had proved so treacherous to those who had selected the adjoining chamber for its fancied privacy. .

“ The conversation within, when we were near enough to hear it, seemed animated, and, from what followed, enabled us to judge with correctness the subject under previous discussion.

“ ‘ Still, my lord, I cannot discover,’ said Pauline, ‘ the importance you attach to this accidental meeting between Miss Meadows and the brigand or smuggler—I know not the proper term. What power can a contrabandista have to injure you? Why should he desire it?’

“ ‘ Dull woman!’ exclaimed the Earl, passionately, ‘ must I again recall what two-and-twenty years have partially obliterated from men’s memories? Now hear and judge wherefore I designate William Devereux the bitterest enemy that lives—and, as you know, De Bomont, I can number many.’

“ ‘ Nay, my lord, why recall what is for-

gotten, or, I may add, it would be desirable that it were so,' said De Bomont, interrupting him.

" ' Why, simply because I anticipate most serious annoyance where I considered that none could exist. The insolence of that swindler, whose assumed respectability, unhappily, I had to guarantee; the discovery that a girl I had bred, and believed to be a puppet, had actually evaded the *surveillance* of her trusty guardian;' and he nodded contemptuously at Madame d'Arville — ' all these, Chevalier, would prove sufficiently vexatious. Think how pleasant my position would be, were any but a creature of my own to obtain a husband's rights over the person and property of my youthful ward? Then fancy, in addition, that that person who was thus armed with the means of inflicting a crushing blow to character and fortune, was one by right and by personal assurance a man whose enmity to me is mortal.'

" ' But, my lord,' interrupted Pauline,

‘ why should this Ranger be such a one?’

“ ‘ Attend!’ returned the Earl, sternly. ‘ Your inquiry shall be answered, not to satisfy a woman’s curiosity, but to mark the extent of that danger, which your indifference and want of fidelity in discharging an important trust have exposed your benefactor to—’

“ ‘ My benefactor!’ exclaimed Madame d’Arville, contemptuously.

“ ‘ Ay,’ replied the Earl. ‘ Who gave protection and a home to the barefooted penitent of the Carmelites? Methinks,’ and he threw a meaning glance over the luxurious furniture of the apartment, ‘ these down-stuffed pillows are somewhat softer than the wooden bench, which, as the pious sisterhood believed, however uncomfortable to the body, was highly salubrious to the soul.’

“ ‘ My lord,’ observed the Chevalier, ‘ forbear. These idle recriminations consume

time which may and should be more usefully employed.'

" 'You are right, De Bomont. But I must convince this lady—if a woman be indeed open to conviction—how injurious her past misconduct might have—nay, even yet, may prove.'

" 'But why, my lord, recall this half-forgotten transaction?' exclaimed the Chevalier.

" 'That past neglect may be succeeded by future circumspection. May not necessity hereafter place others under this lady's *surveillance*, whose seclusion may be as imperiously required, although the reasons for it may not be disclosed?'

" 'My lord,' said De Bomont, 'I still question the prudence of—'

" 'Confiding to one who dare not be unfaithful, the obsolete occurrence, with which, not improbably, she may be perfectly acquainted already. Madame, I crave your

attention — and when you have heard my short narrative, say afterwards whether I have not good reason to censure your incaution.'

"The lady bowed; and as the Earl proceeded, Carlotta pressed my arm, and whispered in my ear, 'Now for some villanous revelation.'

"Twenty-two years have passed since I left England to travel on the Continent—and at the carnival in Naples was introduced to a young Irishman named Devereux. Like many of his countrymen, he was a hot-headed and unsuspecting fool — one who, in the parlance of the world, atones by the warmth of the heart for the weakness of the head. His previous history is briefly told. Without family connexions,—his fortune, a subaltern's commission — Devereux had tact or luck — call it which you will — and in country quarters managed to win the affections of an orphan heiress, who had £15,000 at her own disposal. He proposed to her guardian, and was refused, but the lady — as wards will do

occasionally — differed in opinion from her uncle. She was of age — consequently, her own mistress—and ended matters by an elopement and marriage at Gretna Green. She was repudiated by the only relative she had on earth—her guardian—and he died a few months afterwards, leaving his niece unforgiven, and bequeathing an enormous fortune to endow an hospital.

“ The lady did not live long enough to regret the consequences of her precipitate marriage—she died in giving birth to a son. Devereux, who was as warmly attached to his wife as a volatile Irishman could be, repaired to the Continent to forget, in change of scene and society, the loss he had sustained—and he had been travelling a few months, when accident made us acquainted, as I said before, at Naples.

“ If in travel he had sought a remedy for sorrow, he had found it ere I met him—for I found Devereux moving in the gayest circle in the city. An agreeable person, and the

off-hand manner which Irishmen possess and women admire, had made him a favourite with the fair sex. His *affaires du cœur* were, according to report, numerous and successful—and a duel, in which he had wounded and disarmed a rival, added to his celebrity. Rumour affirmed that he was fourfold wealthier than in reality he was. No wonder, then, that in the *élite* circles of society his intimacy was encouraged—some with designs upon his person—others with an eye upon his purse.

“ But every attempt to reach the latter as yet had proved unsuccessful, and the fascinations of the fairest gamblers failed in inducing Devereux to play. Nearly of the same age, the Irishman and I became intimates—and, although he never joined the public tables, in private we played for trifling sums.

“ Devereux was not only an unskilful player, but, with a partiality for the bottle, he played generally under an excitement

which gave his opponent the advantage. Hitherto, we had confined ourselves to stakes of trifling consequence—but one evening he proposed, and I consented, to increase them considerably. Fortune declared against him. He drank—doubled the stakes—drank deeper—played deeper—lost—renewed the play next evening—luck continued steadily against him, and, in a week, I was a winner of £10,000.

“ After giving me a draft for the last thousand, he left my hotel, as I fancied, to go to bed, but, with the desperate hope of retrieving his losses, he hurried to a well-known casino, and there commenced play anew. There he remained all night—and when he reached his hotel next morning, Devereux was not master of a guinea.

“ From a drunken slumber he was aroused at noon. My successes had been blazoned over the city, and the sums I had won from Devereux were grossly exaggerated. A fellow, whom I had rivalled, pretended to

have discovered that to foul play I was indebted for my winnings, and little difficulty occurred in bringing the ruined fool to adopt the same opinion. Maddened by this belief, Devereux hurried to my hotel. There he was informed that I had gone out to ride with my friend De Bomont, and learned the direction I had taken. He mounted his horse, followed, and overtook us. An unfortunate rencontre ensued—I would have avoided it, but his fury was uncontrollable; and, after heaping on me the most offensive epithets, he crowned the insult by striking me repeatedly with his riding-cane. An appeal to the sword was unavoidable—we instantly dismounted—my groom held the horses, and De Bomont looked on. Devereux was an able swordsman, but rage mastered discretion, and in a furious lunge his foot slipped. With such an antagonist no chance could be thrown away—I seized the advantage, and, before he could recover his footing and resume his guard, my sword was through his body, and my enemy

gasping in the agonies of death. He lived but a minute—muttered that his boy was a beggar—made one convulsive effort to raise himself and speak—fell back, groaned, and expired.

“ My success, exaggerated as it was, provoked the envy of those who had striven in vain to induce Devereux to play—and reports were circulated that I had not only won with loaded dice, but also removed the man I plundered by means equally unfair. Soon after, I was recalled to England—but there these malicious rumours had already reached, and even my own father was prejudiced against me. To mark his displeasure, the dotard alienated every farthing that was disposable—arrears of rent were remitted to the tenants—annuities were assigned to all the servants—and, to crown his folly, he had the infant son of Devereux sought out, with the determination of making a handsome provision for the orphan. He died suddenly, however, before he could legally effect the in-

tended settlement—and when I reached the Hall, I found that the boy was there already.

“The servant who had attended me while abroad, married, and retired from my service, and to his charge I committed young Devereux. He was brought up under another name, and the strictest injunctions were given to Nevill, to conceal every particular that could lead him to the knowledge of who had been his father. For sixteen years these orders were strictly obeyed—and, but for the intervention of one of those holy nuisances, a conscientious parson, the secret of the boy's birth would have gone to the grave with its sole possessor, save myself. Finding himself sinking under an infirmity which he knew to be incurable, Fevill yielded to the exhortations of his spiritual director. Young Devereux was brought to his bedside—the secret of his birth entrusted to the boy, in presence of the clergyman—and a few hundred pounds, the savings of a life, committed

to Mr. ——'s care, in trust for the orphan of my unsuccessful antagonist.

“ Now, madame, mark the *finale* of the tale. The funeral of Nevill was scarcely solemnised, when his *protégé* disappeared. The parson notified the confession of the dead man to me—the disposition of his small property—and also the singular circumstances under which the heir had vanished. Of course, I treated the communication with indifference—barely acknowledged the letter which conveyed it—and would have forgotten it, if I could. I know not wherefore, but some instinctive feeling whispered that with the existence of young Devereux danger was associated—and this singular presentiment was true.

“ Three years had elapsed, and no tidings of the boy had reached the gentleman under whose guardianship Nevill had placed him, and the inference was therefore strong that he was no longer among the living. One evening, to mark the site of a cottage for a

gamekeeper, I had strolled into the remotest corner of the park, and, in returning, was rather startled when I crossed a stile, to observe a young man attired in sailor's clothes, step from a clump of trees, and boldly confront me. Need I add, that my alarm was not abated, by seeing in the person of the stranger the living image of him who, twenty years before, had fallen by my hand.

“ ‘ Who are you ? ’ I asked.

“ ‘ Your deadliest enemy, ’ was coolly returned.

“ ‘ Your name ! ’

“ ‘ Devereux. ’

“ ‘ Would you rob me, scoundrel ? ’

“ ‘ No, although the robbery of a father might justify the act. ’

“ ‘ What, then, brings you here ? ’

“ ‘ To warn *you*—ay, and the warning comes from the dead. ’

“ ‘ Go on, fellow ; I shall cry for assistance. ’

“ ‘ Which, my Lord Earl, would not avail ; ’

and as he spoke he flung a buttoned jacket open, and displayed a dirk and pistols belted round his waist.

“ ‘ Murder is then your object.’

“ ‘ *The time is not yet come.* This is our *first* meeting—look to the *third*, my lord!’

“ I saw through a vista in the wood an armed gamekeeper approaching—and sprang forward to seize my enemy. My effort was dexterously evaded, and a slight stroke of his foot upon my ankle laid me prostrate on the ground. Standing over me, the villain looked on me with a smile, in which hate and scorn were concentrated; while, calmly taking a pistol from his belt, he examined the priming, cocked it deliberately, and placed the muzzle within a foot of my breast.

“ ‘ No, no,’ he said; ‘ your doom to the very letter shall be fulfilled, and yet my finger itches to touch the trigger. I must avoid temptation, Earl;’ and, uncocking the weapon, he returned it to his belt. ‘ Mark!’ he continued; ‘ my next visit shall be harmless as

this—*beware of the third!*—that will be the fatal one.'

"He spoke—turned into the next coppice—and, as the keeper had diverged from the path which led to the spot where this singular rencontre had occurred, the scoundrel who had assaulted and insulted me found no difficulty in escaping.

"But why prolong the story, or name the varied agencies by which I reached the truth? He," and he directed an angry look at the lady of the mansion, "he, whom your most culpable imprudence has permitted to play lover to my ward, is the avowed—the mortal enemy of your patron—William Devereux—or Will the Ranger, if you please."

"Before Pauline could reply, the Chevalier, who stood beside the window which overlooked the garden, hastily remarked,

"Observe, my lord — d'Arlincourt is pacing the garden-walk alone. 'Twas a short interview—and, might I hazard a conjecture, anything but a satisfactory one.'

“ ‘ I fancy so, and the first fruits of his lady’s imprudence are already self-apparent,’ returned the Earl. ‘ Let us join him. A little of the gentle violence he hinted at may prove necessary, after all. Had you, Madame d’Arville, discharged your duty, this difficulty would not have occurred.’

“ He said, and, followed by De Bomont, left the room.

“ Pauline, when the door closed, listened for a few moments, until the Earl’s presence in the garden assured her that she was alone—and thoughts she had been burning to give vent to then gained utterance.

“ ‘ And so, my lord,’ she muttered, ‘ this is your version of robbery effected first, and murder afterwards committed to conceal it! *I* could, however, have given you some particulars which may have conveniently escaped your recollection. How the world wronged you! They say you played with loaded dice. Ha! ha! Base slanderers! it was only with marked cards—and his foot slipped conveni-

ently. No, there again a lapse of memory occurs. Your friend, De Bomont, caught his sword arm to prevent mischief, while you stabbed him to the hilt. Thought you the murder was secret? Oh, no, my lord Earl—Nevill's drunken revelations were candid, even as his dying ones. But, blessed Virgin! can this wild adventurer be the beggared orphan of the murdered dupe? If he be—then, infidel as I have been, I will admit there is, even in this world, a retributive Providence. Ha! they join d'Arlincourt. If air and gesture may be trusted, friend Jules, thy morning interview has failed. And so, I am entrusted, because I dare not be unfaithful! Good, my lord, I thank you for your confidence. You think me a cast-away—a deserted wretch dependent on your tyrant will — no longer allowed to share, but reserved to minister to your pleasures. Ah! often have I deceived—often, as the world terms it—dishonoured you—ay, and when you least suspected it—but the *coup d'éclat* is wanting. Fear not—

it is prepared. Often has your purse enabled Jules and me to mingle in the festivities of the south, while you supposed that she, who was romping at the carnival, was groaning life away in a Carmelite cell—and while the mask was in her hand, you fancied it held the mis-sal. Well, Jules, thou and I will have many a joyous day once more in sunny Italy. I, freed from dependance upon an imperious tyrant—and thou, from the thrall of a jealous shrew, whom thou wert weak enough to wed. But now for a visit to the toilet before I meet my lover.' She said, and with a face beaming with animation at the ideal portrait of future pleasure she had drawn, she quitted the apartment.

“A laugh of triumphant derision burst from Carlotta.

“ ‘So—Countess d’Arlincourt that is to be—thou hast raised a glorious edifice—see that the foundation be not pasteboard, and that the deserted shrew do not overturn the building. For a portion of the private history of your

paramour, I hold myself your debtor. When I was hanging over the cradle of his dying boy, and wearying every saint with prayers for his recovery, the villain father, who, as I believed, was seeking a maintenance for his wife and child in the humble calling of his youth, was rioting in luxury under an assumed name, and supported by a cast-off wanton. Well, Pauline, even yet the tender-hearted Earl, no doubt, feels deeply for the sufferings his faithful mistress underwent, when, in the cell of the Carmelites, she sighed for her absent lover. To undeceive him will be merciful. My lord Earl, thou shalt be a wiser man before you sleep—ay, and probably, my next companion in this closet.'

"We quitted the secret chamber and repaired to mine—but before five minutes had elapsed, Susan appeared, bearing a request from the Earl to speak with me in the garden. As the pretty villager assisted me to dress, Carlotta counselled me upon the course I should pursue.

“ ‘Be cautious—admit nothing of your meeting with the Ranger. What fell from the Earl’s lips may convince you that concealment on that subject must be preserved, and the affair left in the mystery it is involved in. Be firm in the rejection of his minion’s suit, and leave the rest to Heaven and me. Should the worst occur, and instant compulsion be threatened, before it could be carried into effect I will spring a mine that will scatter into atoms the villanous confederacy. Still, for your own sake, I wish you were beyond the reach of danger, ere a discovery is made, which possibly may lead to bloodshed. For every result I am prepared. No matter. When all is quiet I will come to your chamber—and when you hear part of my confessions, you may account for the indifference with which I look to consequences, with which the outraged feelings of an insulted woman will repay the duplicity of the past, and exact ample vengeance on a faithless vil-

lain, whom every tie of gratitude should have bound to her eternally.'

"I found the Earl in deep conversation with his male companions, and, when I appeared at the end of the terrace, he stopped and spoke emphatically for a moment, as one might infer from the action of head and hand. The Chevalier turned away in the direction of the château, while d'Arlincourt walked quietly down an alley, at the extremity of which, on a rustic bench, I perceived Madame d'Arville reading or pretending to read.

"I need not weary you with the long and unsatisfactory interview between a false guardian and his plundered ward. My knowledge of the past and the present, of course, rendered every effort at deceit unavailing. Artful as the questions were with which he endeavoured to ascertain the extent of my acquaintance with the Ranger, the brief and evasive answers I returned left him as suspicious, but not wiser than when our *tête-à-tête* com-

menced—while every entreaty and argument employed to induce me to accept the husband he proposed were coldly and resolutely rejected. In a burst of passion, previously controlled, he flung the hand he held away.

“‘And will you presume to decline accepting the husband I have chosen?’ he said, while his brows contracted until they met.

“‘Yes, my lord,’ I returned firmly, ‘and keep the resolution too.’”

“‘Weak girl! Ere another sun is set, you shall be the bride of d’Arlincourt.’

“‘False lord! Before that time elapses, your tyrant thrall may end.’

“He started—looked as if he would have searched my very soul—and, ere the words had died upon my lips, I was sensible of the terrible imprudence I had committed.

“‘Ha! this hint is perfectly intelligible. Permit me to thank you for much candour, although I cannot compliment you on obedience.’

“Bowing ceremoniously, he turned into a

walk which led to the bench on which my lord elect, and the countess in expectancy, were seated—and I returned to the house, dreading a meeting with Carlotta, whose cautionary advice had, as it afterwards turned out, been fatally unheeded.

“When summoned to dinner, I declined leaving my room, under the plea of indisposition. The excuse appeared sufficient; and, probably, in the existing posture of affairs, my absence was desirable. Carlotta, from whom no movement in the mansion seemed concealable, acquainted me that the party were more disunited in the dining-room than they had been in Pauline’s boudoir the night before—that d’Arlinecourt had gone so far as to threaten the Earl with exposure, to which an angry defiance was retorted. Madame, in a fit of petulance at some sarcastic observation, had quitted the room—and De Bomont was vainly endeavouring to keep terms between two persons, whom dislike on one side, and design on the other, had rendered mutually inimical.

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The Chevalier's appeared no easy task—the Earl and his gambling associate drank freely—and the insolent pretensions of the ex-courier were returned by a cold, contemptuous endurance on the Earl's part, which promised to snap the rope of sand which binds high and low caste villains in vicious association.

“ ‘ And now, Carlotta,’ I said, ‘ until supper-time we need fear no interruption—all is prepared for escape—and I claim the confessions which you promised. They will while an hour away, pending the most trying passage in a life so young as mine.’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, lady, you say right. It will indeed be a trying passage. The whole story of another existence which had reached the longest span of mortality would hardly be crowded with more momentous incident than a few hours in yours may realise. I name this not to discourage but confirm. May every saint assist you !’ ”

“ ‘ But, Carlotta, should we fail—’ ”

“ ‘ Then the worst misery which could befall

you may be dreaded—a union with a cheat—a brigand—and a murderer.'

" ' Good Heaven ! is d'Arlincourt what you describe ? Is he indeed so guilty ?'

" ' Attend, and my wretched history will satisfy you that I am no slanderer.'

" The door was carefully secured, and the sad story of Carlotta thus commenced.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CARLOTTA'S STORY.

Lady Macbeth. Speak! speak!

Macduff. Oh! gentle lady,

'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak;

The repetition, in a woman's ear,

Would murder as it fell.

SHAKSPEARE.

“My birth is humble—my father was a small wine-grower in the mountain district, some thirty miles from Naples, and, until I was fifteen, none led a more secluded, and, let me add, a happier life. Nothing could be more pastoral than the habits and pursuits of those who tenanted the valley where I first drew breath, and the hills which enclose it. The high grounds were occupied by herdsmen—and the valleys, where cultivation could be introduced, were tenanted by the humblest

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class of agriculturists, who, with the assistance of one or two lowlier peasants than themselves, managed from a sterile soil to obtain rustic independence, without the slightest approach to wealth.

“My father was, probably, the most comfortable in this remote community, and the parent of Jules Canet the most wretched. A vine-dresser, and the possessor of a lowly cottage he rented from my father, the old man, by daily labour, supported a miserable existence. He had a son advancing fast to manhood—but from him the vine-dresser received no assistance. Jules had been taken when a boy from his father by an uncle, who was a curé in the neighbourhood—and report whispered that the old priest had sincere reason for regretting the adoption of his worthless *protégé*. Often had the curé threatened to discard his nephew altogether—and the rare visits Jules Canet paid to the cottage of his father were said not to arise from natural affection, but from the temporary expediency

of an humble home, when misconduct had obliged his uncle to close his doors against his vicious relative.

“ Like criminals one reads of, Jules Canet, with a disposition radically bad, possessed quick talents and a pleasing exterior. The trifling scholarship which his idle habits allowed him to acquire from the instructions of his uncle gave him a marked superiority over the ignorant peasantry of the district. He had learned enough to render him more dangerous than he would have been had he remained totally illiterate, and his information received a vicious direction—to deceive others, but not reform one of the most corrupt hearts with which nature had ever cursed a malefactor.

“ Such was Jules Canet at eighteen. I then was two years younger. His father's cottage was not a bowshot from our vineyard—and, when in disgrace with the old curé, he came thither until the priest's displeasure had abated and he was permitted to return,

his only solace appeared to be in my society. My father, however, particularly disliked him, and prohibited me from holding any communication with one whose reputation was so bad. At sixteen, the eye is more consulted than the judgment—Jules was certainly the handsomest youth in all the district—and he had art enough to persuade me that he was injured in the world's opinion, and a sufferer through love of me. His uncle, as he informed me, had designed him for the church—but passion for me had rendered him deaf to every inducement held out to enter on a monastic probation. Hence the angry discussions and constant quarrels between himself and his protector. A love-sick girl is always a willing dupe—I pitied, believed, and unreservedly gave him my young heart, and loved with an ardour bordering on adoration.

“A few months passed—our stolen interviews were neither so long nor frequent as they had been formerly—for my father's suspicions had been awakened, and his commands

that I should avoid Jules Canet more peremptorily repeated than before. We no longer dared to meet in daylight; and, when we did converse, it was in the dead hour of the night, when all besides were sleeping. Then I used to meet my lover in the garden, to which the low casement of my little chamber gave me a ready access.

“One morning, my father appeared unusually disturbed. His impatience during breakfast was remarkable, and I ventured at last to inquire what had occurred to disquiet him so much.

“‘Carlotta,’ he said, ‘you are the cause of this uneasiness. That scoundrel, Jules, has again come back to plague the neighbourhood, and report says, that for some new villany the old curé has finally discharged him. I am sorry to disturb that unfortunate man, his father—but now that his worthless son will be with him permanently, I feel myself unsafe, and will reclaim the cottage, though much against my will, from the old

vine-dresser. As you dread my eternal displeasure, see that you hold no intercourse with a reprobate, whom everybody expects to go to the galleys, should he manage to keep clear of the executioner.'

"I was terror-stricken at my father's communication. What new offence had my lover committed? Pshaw! merely refused, through fond attachment to me, to obey his uncle's wish. How easily, when the heart is engaged, does woman find an excuse for the offence of him she loves! Still my curiosity was painfully excited—and I longed for night to see the discarded one, and learn the story from his own lips.

"The time when I might expect my lover came at last, and Jules did not disappoint me. At midnight he was waiting in the garden, and there I joined him. Amid tears and kisses, the fatal quarrel with his uncle was inquired into and answered. I was the cause—and, for love of me, Jules had mortally offended the stern churchman, and in

consequence been ignominiously turned out of doors, with a strict command never to return.

“Need I tell you that, considering Jules had become a martyr for his love to me, I was ardent in offering him my sympathy, and giving him assurances of the extent of the attachment I felt for one, who had proved his fidelity at the expense of future fortune. Canet seized an opportunity so favourable, and pressed me to marry him, and quit my home—and, in a moment of indiscretion, I consented to take this fatal step. But, ignorant as I was of life, one startling difficulty presented itself. We were both penniless—whither should we fly?—what was to support us? My poor father had hoarded a purse of gold—I knew it—for he often mentioned that it was intended for my dower when I married. Jules wormed the secret from me—and then, by admirable casuistry, convinced me that the money was actually my own, and persuaded me to rob my own father, and—wretch that I was—I consented.

“The third night was named for the elopement; and during that interval I could manage to possess myself of the purse. Means of escape to Naples should in the mean time be provided by my felon lover—and, blinded by passion, I bade him a tender farewell, cold to the extent of the crime I had been persuaded to commit, and only anxious for the hour to come, when I should desert a doting father to bind myself for life to the scoundrel who duped, disgraced, and heartlessly abandoned me.

“Let me hurry over my first offence—Jules’s counsels were faithfully obeyed; and my unsuspecting father was plundered and deserted by his infamous daughter. We reached the capital—there our marriage was solemnised—and in the arms of a specious villain I endeavoured to drown the reproaches of accusing conscience, and for a time succeeded—but the hour of retribution was at hand.

“Before the second month had passed, a

change in my husband's habits and manner became too apparent to escape my notice. He had formed an acquaintance with a Frenchman named Ducasse, and most of his time was spent in this foreigner's society. The money which I had stolen from my father amounted to a much larger sum than I had expected. To Jules its outlay was committed—and in what way it was expended I neither knew nor had curiosity to make the slightest inquiry.

“A serious change came over Canet's spirits. In the company of Ducasse, as they both told me, he had visited every place of public resort—a statement which afterwards I discovered was untrue. I felt loneliness and disappointment—but no complaint escaped me.

“One night, my husband and his companion returned much earlier than was customary, and Jules seemed unusually dispirited. He called for supper—the order was obeyed—and, while in an adjoining room, I overheard snatches of a low and hurried conversation.

"A murmuring statement of my husband concluded with a sentence delivered in a higher tone that met my ear distinctly, 'Not worth ten pieces upon earth! Ten! said I? Not five!'

"'Bah!' returned Ducasse, contemptuously, 'much cause for complaint when the want is remedied so easily!'

"'Would a small sum place matters right?'

"'Ay, and every paul in a few nights would produce a zechino.'

"'Enough! At least it shall be attempted.'

"They supped—drank for an hour—separated—and my husband announced that he was leaving Naples for three days. I had begun to dread him. Questions which I had unintentionally asked produced an angry answer. Ducasse and he appeared engaged in secret and dangerous transactions — and suspicion was excited, without any power on my part of penetrating a mysterious connection

between people who a month before were unknown to each other.'

"A tap at the door interrupted Carlotta's narrative—and Susan, when admitted, placed a billet in her hand. The seal was broken—the eye glanced rapidly over the contents,—and the purport of the note might be inferred from the remarks its perusal caused.

"Suspend opinions, dearest C——, until I have a private interview. Think not that past fidelity is forgotten, or the first impressions made upon the heart can ever be obliterated.' She laid down the note. 'So, so,' she muttered, all excellent '*Dearest C——, past fidelity and first impressions. Fortune places the means within my power of proving my penitence—' Ay, penitence, that is the term. Ah! Jules, thou art an unrivalled scoundrel. 'Twice you saved me from—I dare not write it—' I will, M. d'Arlincourt, however, fill the blank your modesty has omitted—the galleys and the*

gibbet. ‘Help me to fortune now — you shall share it—and you alone.’ *O! none can doubt your sincerity, noble Count.* ‘Meet me at ten o’clock in the garden, and at the termination of the great avenue. Fail not — as you would bind to you for ever a repentant lover, and a devoted husband—if you will only permit that claim to be re-asserted by the once happy JULES.’

“For a moment Carlotta turned her eyes with amazement to the ceiling.

“‘Great God!’ she uttered, passionately, ‘was ever mortal villany pushed to such extent! Yes, Jules, I will meet thee. But you, lady, shall hear the sequel of my story first. Who gave you this letter, Susan?’

“‘The Count’s attendant. He waits an answer. What shall I say?’

“‘That at the appointed place, and at ten o’clock precisely, I shall expect his master. Whisper your message in the fellow’s ear. Is all quiet, Susan?’

“‘I think not. The voices of those within

the dining-room were loud and angry when I passed the door.'

"She said, and left us, while Carlotta thus continued—

"'It was long past midnight, when a knock at the chamber-door aroused me. To the inquiry I made, 'Jules' was responded. I rose, withdrew the bolt, and my husband entered. He was deadly pale, and seemed like a man exhausted and over-travelled.

"Well, dear Jules,' I said, as I embraced him, 'has your journey prospered?'

"'Yes,' he replied: 'I am weary—strike another light, and fetch some wine.'

"I obeyed the order — brought a flask; and, until it was exhausted, Canet filled glass after glass; and, although he had complained of fatigue, seemed in no hurry to retire. I urged him, but he evinced displeasure. At last the convent clock struck three. He rose, drew a leathern purse from his bosom, desired me to secure it until morning, and then reluctantly took the lamp and entered the

sleeping-chamber. I followed. Alas! it was not to obtain repose.

“Fatigue, assisted by wine drunk freely, produced the effect which might have been expected, and in a short time my husband was asleep. His were not refreshing slumbers—frequent startings, grinding of the teeth, and hurried mutterings, bespoke ‘a mind diseased.’ At last I could collect half sentences; and, before long, horrible suspicions filled my mind.

“‘Pshaw! deny it not! ‘Tis useless,’ he murmured. ‘Where is the leathern bag? Give me the key. I know the chest. No outcry will avail. Ha! will you? Down—down! His face blackens!’—a pause of the dreamer followed. ‘How long he struggled!—and now to smooth the bed. His arm moves! No, ‘twas fancy’—and a deep groan from a breast surcharged with crime ended the broken revelations of a man whom I ascertained to be a murderer, and—oh! worse far—that man, a husband.

“Sleep such as his was unrefreshing; and when morning came, the sunken eye and haggard look told how fearfully the visions of the night had disturbed the criminal. After breakfast, he asked and received the purse. It was a leathern bag; and, as he poured its contents upon the table, he seemed totally unacquainted with what they were, or to what extent they amounted.

“‘Ten—fifteen—twenty—gold—well,’ as he separated the more valuable coins from silver. ‘What’s here?’ and he unfolded a piece of paper. ‘A ring! ay, and I should fancy it one of value. Another packet. Let us uncloset it. Bah! a bone! A relic! Pshaw! Off, silly humbug!’ and he flung it scornfully upon the floor. ‘A knock!’ He started and turned pale. ‘Sweep the money into the bag, Carlotta. Put it aside. I will admit the visiter.’

“The stranger was Ducasse. A hasty greeting passed. Canet followed me to the sleeping chamber, took some money from the

bag, desired me to secure the rest, told me he should be absent until supper, and then departed with his friend.

“Horrible suspicions haunted me. I felt assured, as I concealed the purse, that its contents had been obtained by far worse means than theft—by murder.

“It was late when my husband returned. He had evidently been drinking. Another flask was demanded. He drank it, and we went to bed. The same excitement, with broken sleep and fearful mutterings, distracted his troubled mind, and kept me waking. Again, Ducasse called next morning. Canet took the purse, placed it in his bosom, and with the Frenchman left me, after announcing that his return would be late.

“I never remember passing a day so wretchedly, as that which shall never be forgotten, while memory remains. A weight pressed upon my heart—I feared I knew not what—for some secret presentiment of coming evil irresistibly possessed me, and no

effort could overcome it. Twelve—two, pealed from the steeple-clock of Dominicans, and still Canet did not re I trimmed the lamp, took my rosary, strove to pray. The words died inartic on my lips, and even that solace of the rable was denied me.

“Suddenly footsteps were heard be some one knocked and obtained admission was not Jules Canet; and a whispering few minutes followed. Presently, I several persons ascend the stairs—the was opened—three men entered the room unceremoniously told me that I was a prisoner and that they were officers of public safety.

“While the principal examined me other two searched the apartments: but personal inquiry and local search produced no proof of guilt, and freed me from suspicion.

“‘It is what I expected,’ said the ‘Poor girl! she is the victim, and not accomplice.’

"Of Canet's pursuits, absence, and return, I had been questioned, and answered satisfactorily; and it was intimated that I should merely be placed under *surveillance*, and be required to remain in Naples until the criminal was tried.

" 'What is my husband's crime?' I faltered.

"The functionary I addressed turned on me a searching look.

" 'Have *you* no knowledge of it whatever?'

" 'None—so help me Heaven!' was the reply.

" 'Robbery and murder!' returned the official.

" 'Gracious God! Then are my worst fears realized. Who was the victim?'

"Muttering a prayer for his soul's repose, the functionary crossed himself devoutly.

" 'One whom every consideration, human and divine, should have preserved. His uncle!—the Curé of San Fiorenzo.'

“ ‘Great God ! my fears were true,’ I exclaimed, and dropped from the chair insensible.

“ When I recovered, I found myself in charge of two females belonging to the house, who treated me with kindness. The police agents had retired—but they had told the women all that I had suspected. The priest of San Fiorenzo had been robbed and murdered—an attempt to fire the house had failed—and, though great ingenuity had been employed by the criminal, evidence of the commission of murder, ‘foul and unnatural,’ remained. The priest had struggled hard—and livid marks upon his throat proved that he had died by strangulation. A belated peasant had seen Jules Canet hurrying from the house of death ; and although positive evidence did not exist—for purse and relics had been destroyed before his apprehension—no human doubt existed that Canet had robbed and murdered his benefactor.

“ He was tried. A link wanting in the

evidence saved him from the guillotine—but he was sentenced *for life to the galleys!*”

“ I nearly fainted, as I exclaimed, ‘ Gracious Heaven! and was this villain my destined husband?’”

“ Yes, (replied Carlotta,) but more remains—as yet I was innocent of all, save black and damning ingratitude to a too confiding father—ay, one who doated on, forgave, and was deceived again! But to proceed—

“ The mental agony I suffered when the dreadful intelligence of his condemnation reached me is not to be described. I was alone in a great city—not a friend to whom I might confide my sorrow—not an acquaintance to counsel or assist me in this afflicting hour of heavy visitation. To crown the extent of my wretchedness, I was absolutely without money, nor did I know a being to whom I dared mention my distress, and sue for assistance. The owners of the house where I had resided since my unfortunate elopement quickly discovered my poverty—

made my husband's crime a plea for turning me into the streets—and, without food or shelter, at the dead hour of midnight, I found myself roaming in a part of Naples totally unknown to me. Wearied and unable to proceed further, I sat down beneath the portico of the Church of San Isidro, laid my head against a marble column, and breathed a fervent prayer to Heaven that death might end my misery.

“I had not been many minutes in this humble resting-place, before steps approached, and two men stopped at the base of the pillar. From the position in which I was crouched, and the shadow of the column, I remained undiscovered, although the strangers—two men enveloped in dark mantillas—stood more in moonlight, and were distinctly visible. For some time they maintained profound silence, while, through fear, I scarcely ventured to breathe.

“‘What detains him?’ muttered one of the dark strangers to his fellow.

“ ‘Hush? he comes,’ was the reply.

“ As they spoke, a tall figure advanced, and made a slight noise, as if produced by the clapping of his hands together. It seemed a preconcerted signal, and was answered by the strangers.

“ ‘ ’Tis well,’ said the third person, as he joined them. ‘ You are punctual to the time.’

“ ‘ I trust your lordship will ever find me so,’ was the reply.

“ ‘ Who is your companion? Will he prove—’

“ ‘ True as the steel he carries,’ returned the bravo.

“ ‘ Enough—I have found you always faithful, Jaques.’

“ The bravo made an acknowledgment for the compliment paid him by his noble employer.

“ ‘ In five minutes, Count d’Alorno will pass yonder corner,’ said the last comer. ‘ He is closely muffled—going on Love’s

errand to Catarina. Fool! those white and rounded arms shall never again clasp thee to a bosom that artist's chisel imitates in vain! No, an icier embrace is waiting for thee. In one heart, D'Alorno, thou hast supplanted me—but Cipriani takes care that never shall he be rivalled a second time. Be prompt—no bungling, Jaques! Thirty gold pieces. Thou knowest, I keep my word!

“ ‘ Fear not, my lord—I keep mine also,’ growled the ruffian.

“ ‘ To your posts—I must away.’

“ He said, and walked off rapidly, and in a different direction from that by which the devoted victim was expected.

“ Before the brief conference had ended, I had fully comprehended the whole detail of the intended murder, and my decision was as quickly made. Prompt action might avail, and there might still be time allowed to warn the unconscious nobleman. In the deep shadow of the church portico I glided away unnoticed—my dark mantle did not catch the

eye, and my noiseless footsteps were drowned in the heavier tread of the retiring murderers. I gained the corner safely—there two streets united—which should I follow? On the selection life and death depended. I reflected for a second—the more retired of the two would be taken by him whose mission was secret love—and I hurried down the deserted one.

“ Before I had proceeded far, I heard approaching footsteps,—I stopped—a man, closely muffled, came up—he was passing carelessly, when in a low voice I muttered, ‘ Count d’Alorno !’

“ ‘ Ha !’ exclaimed the stranger, as he started back, ‘ know you me then ?’ and flinging his cloak aside, I saw a sword-blade glitter in the moonlight:

“ ‘ I come to save you,’ was my rapid answer. ‘ Hush ! as you value life—murderers are not fifty paces distant.’

“ ‘ Strange !— a woman’s voice — who are you ?’

“ ‘ Ask no questions — retrace your steps — at yonder corner the bravoës are lurking.’

“ ‘ Retrace my steps!’ he exclaimed, haughtily. ‘ Not I, by Heaven! I am on my guard, and now let the villains look to themselves. How many are there?’

“ ‘ Two—the third is gone. He was the employer, and with your own, two names were mentioned.’

“ ‘ Ha! Recollect them, girl! I should like to know my secret enemy, and return him the intended favour.’

“ ‘ One name I overheard was Catarina—the other Cipriani.’

“ ‘ Ha! art thou certain, girl?’

“ ‘ I am. They lorded him, too.’

“ ‘ Right, by all the saints!’

“ As he spoke, from the more open street which I have already described as uniting with that in which we were conversing, a figure issued. He, too, was folded in a cloak, and walked forward in the direction of the church of San Isidro.

“When he had turned the corner, and before thirty seconds had elapsed, a cry was heard of ‘*Murder!*’ The Count sprang forward, sword in hand—I followed—and within a few yards of the portico of San Isidro, we found a man extended in the street. An outcry for assistance was heard by the patrol. They hurried up—but relief was unavailing—the stranger—an English traveller—was dead. Half-a-dozen stabs in the back and breast had been inflicted, and any of them would have proved mortal.

“The Count regarded the bleeding body for a minute, and then muttered to himself a benedicite.

“‘A marvellous escape. San Juan! my patron, I thank thee! But where is the girl?—where my preserver?’

“I timidly approached.

“‘Where, girl, is thy home?—where live thy parents?’

“‘Alas! my lord,’ I replied, ‘I have neither.’

“ ‘Then come with me. Poor wanderer ! I owe thee a life—and this night imposes on me a double debt, and both shall be faithfully discharged. Gratitude first—vengeance afterwards. Cipriani, remain another week in Naples, and if d’Alorno clears not scores with thee !—But come on—poor girl—we’ll shelter thee to-night, and providè for thee to-morrow !’

“ ‘Carlotta !’ exclaimed a voice without.

“ ‘ ’Tis Susan ;’ and stopping her narrative, she rose and unlocked the door.

“ ‘ Madeline has been to your chamber—I met her in the passage, and sent her to seek you in the garden.’

“ ‘ Thanks, my good girl. My presence here might cause suspicion. When opportunity permits, I shall return—and ere I meet my faithful lover and most repentant husband, you, lady, will know more of him than you do at present.’

“ She said, and hurried from the room.”

CHAPTER XIX.

GRATITUDE—THE ESCAPE—THE RECOGNITION.

Angelo. What's your will?

Isabel. I am a woful suitor to your honour,
Please but your honour hear me.

Angelo. Well, what's your suit?

Isabel. There is a vice that most I do abhor,
And most desire should meet the blow of justice,
For which I would not plead, but that I must;
For which I must not plead, but that I am
At war 'twixt will and will not.

Angelo. Well; the matter?

Measure for Measure.

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“The palace of the Count's father, the Duke de Castana Nova, was not far distant from the place where the night's adventure had occurred, and thither the young nobleman, whose life, by a singular accident, I had been made the means of preserving, conducted me. Immediately on our arrival, the chief female

domestic was summoned, and as she had long before retired for the night, while she dressed, refreshments were liberally supplied to me. Heaven knows they were required ! for, from the moment I had been cruelly turned out into the streets, nothing had passed my lips, save a draught of water from the fountain of San Roque.

“Next morning I was informed that the Count desired to see me. I followed the messenger—and through a long corridor lined on either side with sculptured marbles, I was introduced to a magnificent saloon at its extremity, and found myself in the presence of the Count and a noble-looking man, well advanced in years, to whom he presented me as his preserver. My reception was most gracious—and the Duke requested me to narrate the story of my midnight meeting with the bravoës under the colonnade of San Pietro, and the conversation which had passed between them and their employer. The scene of violence I had witnessed was deeply im-

pressed upon my memory, and I informed him accurately of all I had heard, and all I had witnessed.

“ While I detailed the murderous transaction, meaning glances were exchanged between the Count and his father. Neither interrupted me—an emphatic ‘ Ha !’ from the Duke being merely ejaculated when any incidental passage in my simple narrative struck him as more important than the rest. When I had concluded, the elder nobleman remarked, as he turned to the younger,

“ ‘ Clear and distinct.’

“ ‘ And to the very letter what she repeated, when she addressed me in the strada,’ was the reply.

“ ‘ Girl,’ said the Duke, turning to me, ‘ you have done me a noble service—and, but for Heaven and you, the house of Castana Nova would have been this morning plunged in mourning. How shall I reward thee?—thou art poor—here,’ and he put a heavy purse in my hand, ‘ this for thy present neces-

sities. Thou art an outcast—how shall I provide thee with a future home? Speak! I have the will and power—say how shall both be employed to serve thee?”

“ I sank upon my knees, and, bursting into a flood of tears, implored him to save my husband.

“ ‘ Your husband, girl—save him from what?’

“ ‘ Worse than death,’ I murmured; ‘ from the galleys!’

“ ‘ Ha! go on! Thy story briefly, girl?’

“ I complied, and told him candidly all the misery that had befallen me, and all the guilt imputed to Jules Canet.

“ ‘ Alas, poor girl!’ returned the Duke, when he had heard me patiently, ‘ the will I have, but fear I lack the power I boasted just now too freely of. Had the unhappy man been convicted of any crime besides, ere the sun set, his prison doors should have been open; but murder—and that, too, the murder of an uncle and a priest—horrible! Under

what plea can I interfere? Ask anything besides, and—'

" ' Oh, no, no—save him—save him !' I passionately ejaculated. ' Evil though he be—degraded as he is—without him life is charmless. Oh, my lord !' I continued, turning to the Count, ' will you not plead for me to your noble father ?'

" ' Girl, I owe thee a life,' he said, and kindly laid his hand upon my head. ' My lord Duke, let us talk this matter calmly over.'

" Then, sounding a bell which stood beside him on the table, he delivered me to the care of a lacquey who answered the summons, and with an assurance that he would see me presently, I was conducted to my former apartment.

" Several hours passed, and the Count did not redeem his promise. The agony of suspense was intolerable—I dared not hope—for my husband had escaped the scaffold by mere accident—and a malefactor such as he had

little chance to obtain remission of a mitigated punishment. Evening was coming—at last the door opened, and again I was summoned to the saloon, where I found the Duke and his son seated at a table.

“ ‘ I have succeeded,’ said the former.

“ In a moment I was kneeling at his feet, and imprecating blessings on Canet’s deliverer.

“ ‘ But not to the extent of free pardon,’ he continued. ‘ The affair is too recent to admit it—it fills the public mind—and serious displeasure would be evinced, and particularly by the church, were so great a criminal as Canet turned loose upon society. From the galleys he is saved—but, until the memory of his crime is partially forgotten, your husband must remain in prison. Rest assured that, the moment when he may be safely liberated, his dungeon shall be thrown open ; but remember, ’tis on one condition—he quits Naples for ever. This his own security would require—for, were he at liberty, and the assassin

of a churchman discovered by the populace abroad, every hand would stone him.'

" 'Will the term of his imprisonment be long?' I timidly inquired.

" 'It shall be as brief as circumstances allow. You forgot this purse;' and he placed the one he had given me at our first interview within my hand a second time. Nay, no thanks—take this packet—proceed to the prison—and announce to—I trust sincerely—a repentant criminal, that, through the influence of his wife, the sentence, which would have consigned him to ignomy and a suffering life, has been mercifully commuted. But I had forgotten to mention, that a person who sought you at the prison, now waits without to speak to you. Farewell! remember, that the debt of gratitude I owe thee for a son's life is only partly paid.'

" An attendant was summoned, and I was conducted to a chamber where the stranger was expecting me. Who could it be? Who would have aught to say to an outcast like

myself? I opened the door, and next moment was clasped in my father's arms. Poor old man! he had forgiven the ingrate—and left his mountain home to seek his deserted daughter, and assure her that she was pardoned.

“ My father, with a servant of the Duke, accompanied me to the prison—and I had immediate proof that, when that haughty nobleman had boasted of his power, the vaunt was not a vain one. The whisper of his emissary at once procured admission, and the order contained in the letter which I delivered to the head-gaoler was instantly obeyed.

“ ‘ You come in the nick of time—a gang are at this moment preparing for removal—and, but for this commutation of his sentence, Jules Canet would have slept to-night in the Lazaretto. He is a lucky fellow! few malefactors can reach the ear, and fewer still obtain the intervention of the proud and powerful favourite of the king. But come, or the slaves will be removed.’

“ He said, and led the way to an inner

compartment of the prison, and, stopping at a wicket in a gate which looked upon a yard surrounded by lofty walls, he desired me to look in, and recognize the pardoned criminal. I obeyed—and at the sight which met my eye I should have fallen, but for the support of the keeper and my father. A score of squalid wretches, coupled as I had seen hounds by the neck, and manacled in pairs to a heavy chain which strung the whole in one long line together, were waiting for the last convict to be similarly secured—and in that wretched man, haggard and heart-broken, I knew my felon husband.

“ ‘Tis he!’ I cried; ‘they are riveting his chains—stop them! stop them!’ and, as I spoke the words, I fainted in my father’s arms.

“ When I recovered, I found myself in a comfortable apartment, and Canet, no longer a chained galley-slave, kneeling at my feet, and pouring out vows of eternal gratitude—for, from the gaoler he had learned that he

owed his escape from a punishment far worse than death to some secret influence of mine. Oh, how he promised that future amendment should prove his contrition for past crime—and that every act of life to come should be devoted to secure the happiness of the woman who had clung to him in the hour of distress, and snatched him from eternal slavery!—Villain! that hand which saved shall crush thee!”

“ Carlotta paused — rage, jealousy, and revenge had almost crazed her. I gave her water, and presently she calmed down sufficiently to continue her melancholy history.

“ The Duke had not contented himself with merely commuting the sentence of Jules Canet; but, by his intercession, he was removed from the cells of the criminal inhabitants of the gaol, and lodged in a comfortable apartment, usually occupied by state offenders, and these, too, often persons of quality. His room was shared by a foreigner, who had incurred the displeasure of one of the royal princes, but wherefore

none could tell. The secret transpired afterwards—the stranger was a *chevalier d'industrie*, and, as it was asserted, the most adroit cheat and accomplished sleight-of-hand man in Europe. He had assisted a fascinating *danseuse* in plundering a royal prince, who was her lover; and hence he was secretly arrested, and shut up under a vague accusation of being engaged in some state intrigue, but in reality to gratify the revenge of one who had been duped by an artful woman. From him Canet acquired a knowledge of the art, which, as you overheard him boast, rendered him a useful agent of the Earl; and I firmly believe his own assertion, that there is not a more skilful swindler living than himself.

“ Now that Canet was conditionally pardoned, my father urged me to return to the home I had so cruelly deserted, and wait patiently until the period of my husband's imprisonment should end. I was heart-sick of Naples—and other considerations induced me to obey the old man's request. The fact

was, that I felt myself in a situation told me, that at no distant day I become a mother—I consented to leave—took leave of my repentant husband—professed himself—received a promise from the Duke, that Canet's imprisonment be rendered as light and brief as possible and set out, once more, for my mother's home.

“ I omitted to mention that, before I went to the palace of the Duke, to carry the tidings of his pardon to the despairing creature. I had been cautioned by my noble parent to keep the mysterious transactions of the previous night strictly secret—and, need I say, that the injunction was obeyed. The words of the Duke were also emphatically delivered. ‘ The house of Castana Nov forget a favour, or forgive an injury. Personally, I had experienced the truth of my first assertion ; and an occurrence took place before I left the city, which led me to believe that the latter portion of the Duke's

was not an idle threat—for in open day, and in the act of mounting his horse, the Marquis Cipriani was stabbed to the heart by a masked assassin. From the reckless manner in which the deed was done, the ruffian could scarcely expect to escape—and he was overtaken, disarmed, and hurried to a dungeon. From the high rank of the murdered nobleman, the sensation that his death occasioned was absorbing—and the examination of the bravo was impatiently expected on the following day, when it was hoped that torture would force the assassin to reveal the name of his employer; but the general curiosity was disappointed—when the gaoler visited the murderer's cell, it was found that the villain had escaped, and by what agency was wrapped in mystery. My suspicions were awakened—‘The house of Castana Nova never forgave an injury;’ and my belief was fixed, that the same powerful personage who saved Canet from the galleys had unclosed the door of the bravo's dungeon, and enabled him to escape.

“ I returned to the mountains—six months passed—and I was made a mother. My poor father observed that I was coldly received by my former acquaintances; for, although he had never mentioned my having added robbery to ingratitude, the horror of the priest's murder, in some degree, was unfairly extended to me, and Canet's crime reached me indirectly. The old man felt the injustice of the treatment I experienced, and redoubled his kindness. Another impulse, however, cheered me up, and made me disregard popular prejudice—a child demanded a mother's care—and the painful position in which one parent was placed created in the other an additional solicitude for an infant that I looked on already as half-orphaned. I never went abroad—gratitude to my kind father, and maternal duties, employed my time in those social offices which woman alone can perform, and the only unhappy recollections of the past were the offendings against my father—the only present sorrow, when I looked in my

boy's face, was to remember that his father was a prisoner—and worse—a criminal.

“ Four months I had been a mother—and though the term of my husband's confinement was indefinite, still hope cheered me, and I trusted that he would be speedily restored, an altered man, and one who, by exemplary conduct, might yet reclaim the place in humble society which he had forfeited. All was still—my father and my child were sleeping—and a hind, who assisted in the farm-work, was snoring in an outhouse. I heard a horse's feet clatter on the pathway—it stopped at our orchard-gate—and in another minute a man's footstep approached the cottage. A horseman—and at midnight! I rose—looked from the window—and, in the bright moonlight, my husband was recognized at once.

“ Every remembrance of his delinquencies vanished as I sprang from the opened casement, and admitted the father of my boy. My parent was awakened—and from him, the returning prodigal received a hearty welcome.

The Duke had faithfully redeemed his pledge. Canet was again at liberty—but, alas! had the interests of society been consulted, it would have been better that *Count d'Arling-court* should have been sent to his original destination—the galleys.”

“ I smiled at the sarcastic tone in which Carlotta designated the criminal by the fictitious title he had adopted, and she proceeded :

“ I must be brief — Canet’s appearance puzzled me. His horse was good—his clothes excellent. I had left him nearly a year before half-naked—now his equipment was a gentleman’s. To one or two questions of mine an evasive reply was given—and I did not press inquiry further.

“ My father conquered his repugnance to the man—and my womanly feelings for the father of a boy I doted on overcame painful recollections, too forcibly and too frequently recurring. To me, the coldness of the villagers had been annoying ; but to Canet, their marked abhorrence was intolerable. None

returned his salutation—and when the elder peasants encountered him they crossed themselves, and invoked divine protection, as if they had encountered the enemy of man.

“ For a week or two my husband endured the indignities he suffered when he went abroad. Restoration to a wife, and the presence of a child, no doubt, had temporary influence. But gradually a change came over him—and one evening, burning with rage at some fresh indignity, he thus addressed me on his return :—

“ ‘ Carlotta, I must quit the country. The insults of the grovelling hinds, whom I meet in the lonely walks which I purposely select to avoid their hateful presence, are no longer tolerable. This evening, as I strolled down the glen, I encountered Joachim, the miller’s son. He has, I hear, got leave of absence from his regiment, and was hastening towards his father’s. I addressed him civilly, and congratulated him on his return. He drew himself up, eyed me haughtily from head to

foot, and, without a word, passed me as if I were a dog. My mind is made up—I will seek employment in some distant province—and when I obtain the means of supporting you and the dear boy, I will return and remove you.'

"Of course, another separation was a painful ordeal—but, feeling as I did that Jules Canet's guilt was too fully established in the minds of the peasantry to be forgotten, I saw the necessity of my husband's resolution, and gave a reluctant consent. When parting, I placed the contents of the purse the Duke had given me in his hand, and with many a prayer for his reformation and success, embraced and parted from him. Little did I then suspect, that the marked dislike the peasantry justly evinced to my felon husband was made an apology for quitting the retirement of a mountain home to plunge in dissipation anew, and practise upon the unwary those vicious lessons which he had received from his guilty companion in the pri-

son, from which my exertions had delivered him.

“Bad as Jules Canet naturally was, the precepts and example of those outcasts with whom he herded in the gaol of Naples had eradicated every better principle he had possessed. One circumstance, which afterwards came to my knowledge, confirmed the worthlessness of this perfidious man. On being liberated from confinement, he was brought by order of the noble owner to the palace of Castana Nova, and conducted to the presence of the Duke. After receiving some excellent advice, and a promise of future patronage, should amended conduct on his part warrant it, a weighty purse of gold was confided to him to give to *me*.

“‘Go,’ said the Duke, ‘and let a reformed husband be the bearer of the necessary means to obtain an honest independence for her who saved the heir of Castana Nova.’

“His visit to the palace was never alluded to—and the gold sent by the Duke was used

for selfish purposes, or husbanded to enable him to enter on his new career of villany.

“ Weeks became months, and months years, and Canet did not return. He never wrote to me, and whether he were dead or living none could tell. At times, his mysterious absence heavily afflicted me—but love for my child—that absorbing love a mother only knows—partially consoled me. Alas ! that tie to earth was soon to be removed. My boy sickened—the roses fled his cheeks—the lustre of his laughing eyes faded—weaker and weaker, he sank gradually—until his last sigh escaped upon his mother’s bosom !”

“ Carlotta stopped—the recollection of her child’s death produced a burst of anguish — and she sobbed convulsively for some minutes upon my neck. Tears brought relief, and she thus continued :

“ While with a breaking heart I witnessed my darling boy sink gradually—while I hung over his dying cradle —watching every pulsa-

tion of his heart—listening to his hurried breathing—and wearying every saint with prayers that proved unavailing—where was his villain father? Until last night, that era in his history was concealed from me—and I wanted that damning revelation to rouse hatred, deep before, to an intensity beyond increase, beyond removal. Oh! had I known it then, what misery I should have been spared!—and the commission of many an enormous crime would not have been witnessed, as unhappily they were afterwards by me.

“ A fresh cause of uneasiness appeared—my father's health declined—and serious apprehensions were entertained, that ere long he would be called to pay the debt of nature, and I be left upon the world without one to pity or protect me. It was a gloomy prospect that opened now before me—and when I dwelt upon the probability that my worst fears should soon be realised, I supplicated Heaven for deliverance, and prayed for that refuge of the wretched—the grave.

“ It was my daily custom to visit the spot where my boy was sleeping, and strew the green turf that covered him with the wild flowers I gathered in the valley. The anniversary of his death had returned—I hung a fresh garland on his little grave—and sat down to indulge that luxury of affliction—the grief that vents itself unnoticed and un-repressed. Hours passed—the sun sank beneath the gray rocks which crowned the mountain—and evening had come on. Absorbed in melancholy thoughts, I did not observe a stranger’s approach—and, when a slight rustling roused my attention, and caused me to look up, a man, so closely enveloped in a dark cloak as to prevent all recognition, was standing within a pace or two. No portion of his face, save the eyes, was visible—and these were steadily turned upon me. In alarm, at finding myself alone with a stranger at that lone place, I sprang upon my feet, and prepared to quit the cemetery. But a hand firmly grasped my arm,

while a deep voice exclaimed, 'Fear nothing —no harm is intended thee.'

"The tones of the speaker thrilled to the heart, although they sounded strange to the ear—I trembled violently — there was in the studied concealment of the unknown much to cause alarm. I had heard that bandits frequently sought shelter in the remote fastnesses of our mountain range, and felt half convinced that one of these dreaded men was now beside me. Mustering an appearance of resolution I did not possess, I disengaged myself from his hold, and moved a pace or two—but again the stranger seized my arm.

" 'Carlotta — stop — you know not him who addresses you.'

"A wild suspicion crossed my mind.

" 'Speak! in the name of Heaven! who — what are you?'

" 'Your husband—Jules Canet!' he exclaimed, as he threw his cloak aside.

" 'Heavens! Can it be possible?'

“ ‘ Ay—look closer—mayhap the features may yet be recollected.’

“ It was himself indeed — but four years had made serious alterations—and could the countenance be trusted, that period of a life had been one of care, privations, and dissipation. His costume was in keeping with his looks—half-chasseur and half-brigand—while the carbine in his hand, and the weapons in his belt, told that Jules Canet’s present profession was not a peaceable one. I shrunk from him—the feeling was involuntary—but I could not overcome it.

“ ‘ Ha! report speaks true. The widow’s suitors have effaced the memory of the husband,’ he muttered between his teeth.

“ I forgot to tell you, lady, that a report prevailed of Canet’s death, and, consequently, more than one among my former lovers sought my hand again. Their offers were gratefully but peremptorily declined. God knows! my heart was in my infant’s grave—and a second marriage had never caused a thought.

“ ‘Jules, your suspicions are unfounded. Whence come you? What is the object of seeking me here, instead of boldly coming to my father’s? With you concealment lurks—wherefore this brigand dress?—why are you thus armed?’

“ ‘All this is easily explained—I lack but opportunity. Meet me at midnight in the same place where our first love was interchanged, and every doubt shall be removed.’

“ ‘Oh, how weak is woman’s heart! All but past love was forgotten—I consented, and we parted.

“ ‘Midnight came—a change for the better had come over my father—and with a lightened bosom I met my felon husband. Lady, despise me not. Those, who have not been tempted know little that when in woman the heart and head contend, the issue is a certainty. But I won’t detain you. Despise me as you may, I will not shrink from free confession. We met again—and never was a story more artfully framed to win back the

wavering affection of a woman, who had loved not wisely but too well, than that invented by my profligate husband. Need I observe, that not one syllable of the statement was correct.

“He told me of his wanderings—of the exertions he had made—and the privations he had suffered. All were intended to obtain the means of re-uniting himself to me, and protecting our dead infant. In every attempt he had failed—and, at last, in sheer despair, he had become a smuggler, and joined a band of *contrabandistas* in the mountains. If he had adopted criminal pursuits, love alone had prompted him to oppose himself to the laws, in the hope of acquiring wealth for me. He dared not suddenly separate himself from the band—they would suspect that he designed betraying them—and in all probability his life would pay the penalty. He could not exist without me. Would I, but for a time, accompany him and gladden his solitary hours, ere long, and with ample means to render

the future comfortable, he would return with me to my father's, and prove that the attachment he professed for me was as enduring as it was ardent. I listened, believed, consented, and—but the sequel of my unhappy story will best tell the unequalled villany of my perfidious betrayer.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BANDIT'S RETREAT—JEALOUSY—THE BETRAYAL.

It was a strange and wild retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaws' feet.

SCOTT.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more :
Men were deceivers ever.

SHAKSPEARE.

“The first elopement from my home was sufficiently disgraceful—for I abused the confidence a fond father places in a favourite child, and even stooped to robbery. My second was still more detestable—him whom I had despoiled of money, I now deprived of life. Nay—start not—my *conduct*, and not my *hand*, occasioned it.

“At midnight, when all the inhabitants of our secluded valley were buried in sleep, I

silently left my father's cottage. Canet was watching for me—and at a turning of the road, which, at our last interview, he had named as the place of meeting, I found him waiting. He held two horses in his hand; on one he placed me, mounted the other, and then proceeded by an unfrequented road, which, as I had been informed, led travellers through the wildest district in the mountain country. We rode at as fast a pace as an ill-defined path and twilight would permit—and with the first break of morning diverged from the beaten track, and entered a gloomy gorge in the hills, encompassed by scenery on every side sterile and savage, beyond any thing I could have possibly imagined.

“ ‘Heavens, Jules!’ I ejaculated, ‘whither are you conducting me? No human thing dwells in this desolate region. Here, on that shattered precipice, the eagle may safely build her nest—here, the wolf may rest in full security.’

“ ‘And here,’ returned Canet, breaking a

silence of some minutes, 'men frowned on by the world may find a resting-place—and the bandit—nay, I mean the smuggler—laugh at the greater criminal who would exterminate lighter offenders.'

"For another league we rode through devious paths—the country—if country you could call a region of mountain heights, which seemed formed by some volcanic eruption—became still more desolate—and no pencil could convey an adequate idea of its savage character. By numerous windings, we reached at last an opening in a cliff, through which a horse with difficulty could force an entrance.

" 'We are at home, Carlotta,' said Canet, leading the way. 'When Joachim, the private hussar, wooed the supposed widow of Jules Canet, he did not fancy that he aspired to the lady of a captain. There is my troop—here,' and he bowed, 'here is their commander!'

"I thought I should have fallen from the saddle as I looked on the scene, which was so

suddenly and fearfully presented. In a hollow, the crater of some ancient volcano—with rocks confusedly thrown up, so rugged as to bespeak their origin, and so high as to entail eternal twilight on the small spot above which they towered, a bandit encampment was formed. Half a dozen small tents were pitched irregularly round a marquee of larger size—at one extremity, a charcoal fire blazed, and at the other, a group of horses were picketed—while, perched on a pinnacle of rock, which overlooked the country far and near, a man was seated to watch against surprise. He had noticed our approach—and, long before we had reached the robber bivouac, the wild community had issued from their tents to gaze upon the expected visiter.

“The scene around was passing wild, but the appearance of those who had chosen this mountain fastness for their abiding place was even wilder. Grouped round the fire, a dozen armed men and nearly as many women waited to bid us welcome. To Canet, the

former exhibited a sort of wild respect which announced him to be their leader—while lifting me from the saddle, my felon husband presented me to the band, and then desired the women to conduct me to his tent.

“Oh, God! what were my feelings of remorse and shame, when I found that I had deserted an honest home and a father who idolized me to herd with brigands, and with women whom crime and vice had driven from society, and obliged to mate with felons! The first impression of the haunt of infamy to which Canet had introduced me was revolting—and every day's experience proved that the estimate I had formed of this felonious community was a correct one.

“Lady, a detail of crime and violence would only disgust you, and the scenes I witnessed shall be silently passed over. Fancy, but ask no particulars—rapine and violence abroad—at home, the foul licentiousness which only the depraved can understand. Oh, God! when I think of the months I passed with

that villanous community—when I recall the scenes of profligacy and blood I witnessed—a thrill of horror comes over me, and I shudder at the recollection.

“From the moment that I entered the mountain fastness, it was plainly intimated to me that no female quitted it with life, and that I should form no exception. I found that the information was fatally correct—and when the band left their haunt on predatory excursions, some of them invariably remained behind; and, night and day, this lawless community was placed under mutual *surveillance*. The women were vigilantly watched—but the precaution appeared unnecessary—for none, save myself, had any wish or intention to quit a place and society adapted only for those who had fallen beyond redemption.

“There is in the very idea of restriction something so repugnant to the inborn yearning after liberty, that even were the place of thralldom a palace, the confined one would

long for emancipation. With me, every feeling united to render my situation intolerable. I had been deluded by false statements to leave a peaceful home, and desert a parent in declining health, and one, too, who had already been deceived and had forgiven, to follow the fortunes of a brigand, consort with outcasts from society, and lead the savage life that crime entails on felon deeds. When woman loves, and knows, or fancies that her passion is faithfully returned, every earthly consideration may yield to the all-engrossing impulse of the heart. I had felt the spell—I had proved the depravity of him I loved, and still I loved him—but now the veil was lifted—I had painfully ascertained that I was but the object of momentary passion—caressed, or neglected, as fickle fancy prompted. Still, I believed that none had actually displaced me in the affection of a man bound by every tie of love and gratitude—but even that delusion was presently removed.

“Day was only breaking, when a voice

outside the tent called on my husband to arise. In felon life, the most trifling occurrence is startling—and in a moment Jules Canet started from bed and seized his arms. As it turned out, the cause of alarm was groundless—a man had been discovered in the haze of morning winding up the secret path that led to the robber bivouac, and the vidette in consequence apprised the leader of the band that a stranger approached.

“He proved a friend—if that term can be applied to conventional relations existing between scoundrels, who serve or sell each other as circumstances dictate. The fellow was a courier—his errand to acquaint the band, with whom he was connected, that an English family of distinction would, at a late hour in the evening, pass by a lower road, which skirted the base of the mountains on their route to Rome. From the extent of their luggage and their style of travelling the courier inferred that they were wealthy—and as they had imprudently declined the pro-

tection of an escort, to surprise and rob them would be easily effected. In a brief consultation all was planned for the attempt—the courier took his departure, and early in the evening Canet and his companions set out for the scene of action, leaving, as they always did, one of their band to watch their mountain haunt.

“It was nearly midnight when they returned ; in surprising the unfortunate travellers, and securing much valuable property, they had succeeded to their fullest expectations : but rapacity knows no limit—and, although the booty realised was unusually large, Canet determined to carry the unhappy family into the mountains, and exact a ransom for their deliverance. It was done—the strangers and their attendants were led through devious paths, and safely carried to the robber bivouac—no eye, save that of Heaven, witnessing the deed of violence.

“I had become an object of suspicion ; for

my repugnance to herd with the wretched outcasts of my own sex from the first had made them unfriendly to me—and opinions, too strongly and imprudently expressed, betrayed my abhorrence of a life of crime, and showed how deeply the rash step I had taken was repented.

“ ‘Rest assured, Jules,’ I overheard the ruffian next in rank to my husband whisper, ‘she curses the hour bitterly when you wiled her from her home, and lacks nothing but the opportunity to leave us. Look to it! Her escape will compromise the safety of the band—and she who saved you from the galleys will send us to the scaffold. If she make the attempt, you know the penalty!’

“ ‘*Inflict it!*’ was the villain’s reply. Need I tell you, lady, that penalty was death! and he whom I had saved from perpetual imprisonment—for whom I had given up the very affections which the brute creation acknowledge—he had coolly consented to my murder, if the impulse of a heart not alto-

gether dead to natural sympathies had induced me to break through an imposed restraint to smooth the pillow of a dying father.

“ In consequence of the opinion prevalent among this lawless community that I was less depraved than they—and, worthless as I was, not steeped in crime so deeply as to enable me to look on human suffering unmoved, the captive family were placed under other *surveillance*, and confided to the custody of women brutalised to a worse extent than that of man's enormity. A separate tent was made their prison—I never saw them—and yet, such is the mysterious decree of Heaven, by my agency they were relieved from captivity.

“ One of the unfortunate prisoners was a girl of surpassing beauty; and, from the moment he had first seen her, Canet's admiration of the charming Englishwoman was unbounded. To fancy and possess, with him, was the leading axiom of a felon creed—and, unscrupulous as to means, he too generally succeeded. In this case, a serious obstacle

was opposed—I was the barrier—and in his heart, he cursed the hour when he had seduced me from an honest home. Could he have restored me to freedom and a father, no doubt he would have done so—but once an inmate of the robber haunt, the general security imposed on the unfortunate individual an eternal imprisonment. To have even hinted at the liberation of one to whom the secrets of the infamous confederacy were known would have roused the fury of the outlaws, and compromised the safety of any who ventured to make the dangerous proposal. What was to be done? Mark, lady, the boundless villany of a man destined by a villanous conspiracy to become your husband.

“Deem it not woman’s vanity when I tell you, that then I was considered personally attractive. Early disappointment might have added years to my appearance, but sorrow occasionally gives an interest to the face which, eventually, it robs of beauty. I had unconsciously caught the fancy—or, as he

called it, won the love of one of the bandits—a man of better birth and tastes than his plebeian fellows. By a course of dissipation, he had at last become a criminal, was repudiated by his family, and, to escape justice, had joined the band some months before Canet persuaded me to desert my home and parent. A woman, whose faded countenance still showed traces of former beauty, accompanied him. It was suspected that she, too, had fallen from a position in society once respectable. Her attachment to Bardinetti was ardent—while his indifference was so little hidden, that all felt pity for a woman who lavished love upon an object who took no trouble to conceal his detestation. To me his bearing was polite and deferential. I never suspected that warmer feelings influenced his conduct—but others were more sharp-sighted, and penetrated the true motive of Bardinetti's attentions to me.

“ Among these was Antonia, the neglected mistress of the bandit. Her jealousy had long

since been excited—and I had frequently remarked that, when I passed her, my greeting was not returned, and glances expressing the deepest malignity flashed from eyes, which once might have beamed with love, but seemed now to convey nothing but hatred. Ignorant of the cause, I ascribed it to evil disposition—I feared Antonia, and avoided her—and for a month I had treated her as one unknown.

“It was the third evening of the captivity of the ill-fated travellers that the courier again visited the mountain fastness, and the intelligence he brought produced an unusual sensation. The band were immediately called together, and, retiring to a high ground, they grouped themselves on a detached rock, and a long and excited consultation followed. From the opening in the tent I could observe the passing scene; and the impassioned gestures of the speakers, who appeared to be anything but unanimous in opinion, by frequent and angry interruptions which occurred, indicated that the tidings brought by the courier were

unwelcome. At last, the robber council ended—and soon after the whole departed, leaving the bivouac to the care of a bandit, who the day before had been disabled by a fall.

“The lengthened shadows flung from the surrounding rocks upon the wild encampment they overlooked announced approaching sunset. I was absorbed in gloomy retrospection, when I was recalled from bitter and unavailing remorse by a human figure stopping in the entrance of the tent, and to my surprise I recognised Antonia. An exclamation of terror and surprise was answered by a finger being placed significantly on the intruder's lip, and a muttered entreaty to be silent.

“ ‘Carlotta, fear nothing—no enemy stands before you—but a woman, who, like yourself, suffers from the villany of her betrayer. I suspected *you*—thought that you had rivalled me in the affections of a man for whom I gave up—oh, God ! home and children. I wronged you, and instead of a *deceiver*, I find you, poor girl ! a *deceived one*.’

“ ‘What mean you, Antonia?’

“ ‘Attend!—I must be brief: Jealousy has more eyes than Argus, and ears which no sound escapes. I have watched, plotted, followed, and detected. Ask not the means at present by which the discovery was made—but listen to what is more important.’

“I stared at Antonia in astonishment, as she thus continued:

“ ‘They fancied themselves alone—but I was crouched behind the rock where their villainous interview had been appointed. Had I been detected, my fate was sealed, and the dagger would have ensured eternal silence. But to the tale. Canet is enamoured of the handsome English girl—and Bardinetti fancies *you*. An agent has been engaged to treat for the liberation of the captive family—but Canet is determined to retain the young beauty, who appears to have absolutely fascinated him. He knows the band will not consent to her detention here. Interest and safety oppose it. Mark the infamous compact which has

taken place. Bardinetti assists him to carry off the stranger, and *you* are to be transferred by Canet to the wretch, who, step by step, led me from innocence to crime, until I became the outcast that I am. The worm will turn when it is trodden on—and the woman, whose confidence has been abused, may find in deep revenge some solace for cold contempt and heartless ingratitude. Hark! what noise is that?’ and, rushing from the tent, Antonia left me suddenly.

“The cause of this alarm was speedily explained. The person employed by the banditti to negotiate terms for the liberation of the English travellers had taken alarm, and declined undertaking a business which might compromise his safety. Without opening a communication with the strangers’ friends in Naples, the object for which they were carried into the mountains, of course, would fail. Canet, himself, had occasioned the difficulty by inducing the agent to decline the task he

had undertaken — but accident marred his scheme.

“The messenger who announced the fact that the *employé* of the band had declined a dangerous intervention, accidentally encountered the ruffians before they had reached their destination. Excepting to Canet and his confederate, this intelligence was most unwelcome. The act they had committed was pregnant with danger—their robberies had already excited general alarm—and it was said that the attention of the police—wretched as that body was—had been seriously aroused, and that measures were taking for their prompt suppression. A movement to another district had consequently been decided on—and the daring plan of carrying off the English travellers was a *coup de partance*, on which the opinions of the gang were much divided—some advocating it as a bold experiment—and others denouncing it as a most dangerous one. The refusal of the

agent to open a negotiation for the family's deliverance completely turned the scale.

“ ‘It was worse than madness,’ exclaimed a robber. ‘What! not content ourselves with a noble booty—but, by a deed that will astonish the country, drag down upon us the vengeance of the law! Saints and devils! what folly! The English will stand plunder. Take the purse—it is replenished at the next banker’s. Touch the person—and the outcry raised about British liberty sets every authority in arms.’

“ ‘What is to be done?’ exclaimed another.

“ ‘Why my advice is, to discharge the travellers instantly. Propose an honourable compact with them. If they promise any consideration for regaining freedom, rest assured that promise will be kept. If they do not—why make a merit of necessity, and liberate them. Every hour they are detained the risk increases.’

“ ‘And yet I think the danger is already

incurred beyond the power of remedy. Why then abandon the expected advantages for which the bold experiment was tried? We must seek another haunt—the courier's information is not to be questioned—and the bloodhounds of the law will soon be on the scent. Why not employ another agent? one to whom no suspicion can attach? And, see—by every saint! the very man approaches. Quick! down, behind the rocks! He will pass this spot.'

" 'Nay, 'tis a monk,' returned another; 'I don't altogether like to meddle with the clergy.'

" 'Bah! he shall receive no injury. We'll send him back to shrive the women. Let him have a stoup of wine—convey him to my tent—he must not see the prisoners. On our return to-morrow I will propose, through him, the terms on which the strangers shall regain their liberty;—a part of the ransom shall be given to holy church—and trust me, my arguments shall overcome the monk's

scruples—gold is the touchstone that tries the conscience, whether it belong to friar or to felon.'

“ While this conversation proceeded, the unsuspecting Curé rode up, and was surrounded by the bandits. No explanation was given, but a brief order was issued to conduct the priest to the mountains. Old and feeble, and surprised, the churchman's firmness did not desert him; but, with a boldness that his appearance did not warrant, he denounced the act of violence, and anathematised all concerned. Remonstrance and entreaty were equally disregarded; and, under charge of a bandit, who was directed to lead the churchman to the robber haunt and instantly return, the captured monk was conducted to the bivouac, and his arrival had occasioned the alarm which interrupted Antonia's revelations; but, having ascertained the cause, she speedily rejoined me.

“ ‘Tis a monk,' she said; and, crossing herself devoutly, she expressed a lively horror

at the impiety committed in the detention of a priest. A minute however terminated our *tête-à-tête*. The bandit, to whom the old man had been entrusted, led his captive to the tent, and intimated that there he should remain.

“For a short time the old man seemed lost in astonishment. He muttered to himself—now, prayers for deliverance, and again, denunciations against the offenders. He raised his eyes; the presence of women only seemed to restore his courage; and, in a tone of command, and not entreaty, he desired us to inform him whither he had been brought, and for what purpose he had been thus deprived of liberty.

“The tone of voice was remarkable—it was perfectly familiar—and I looked earnestly at the monk. Heavens! in the old man I recognized the Curé of our valley, and a daily visiter at my father's cottage.

“‘And women, too!’ the priest continued, and he turned his eyes indignantly upon

Antonia and myself. 'Women in this abode of guilt—the haunt of robbers—out upon ye! Leave villany to villain man. Fly from this life of infamy, and by prayer and penitence seek pardon from Heaven. Ha! do my eyes deceive me? No—the murderess, and of a father, too, stands before me.'

"Horror-stricken at the denunciation of the monk, I shrieked and flung myself at his feet, but he spurned me from him as if my very touch would contaminate.

"'Mercy, father!' I exclaimed. 'Pity and pardon one who has sinned deeply, and as deeply sorrowed for her offences. Could I but leave this place of crime, into which I was seduced by one whom I loved, and one whom I now despise, every hour of my existence should be devoted to duty to my deserted father, and penance for past crime.'

"'May your resolution be sincere!' returned the churchman, 'and a part of what you purpose may yet be accomplished: Heaven is never closed against the penitent—

the filial duties a declining father requires from the child he loved too well are not required. Peace to the departed!" and he crossed himself; 'your father is at rest!'

"I uttered a cry of horror, and sank into Antonia's arms.

"Lady, I must hurry my sad detail of crime and misery to a close. I recovered, and then heard the consequences my second desertion of a doting father had occasioned. On the night when my felon husband had again persuaded me to abandon home, I left a letter on the table, intending to soften, as far as it could be possibly done, the rash and guilty step I had been induced to take. My father found and read it—the blow was stunning — and an hour afterwards he was found dead upon the floor, with the fatal writing in his hand.

"When I had sufficiently composed myself, my resolution was formed—to quit the haunt of guilt, or perish in the attempt—Antonia promised to assist, and the monk encouraged

me in the attempt. No doubt, a double motive influenced the old man—in counselling me to fly from the abode of crime, he best pointed to an act that would prove the sincerity of my penitence—and my escape—could it be accomplished—might lead to his own deliverance.

“Circumstances favoured my flight—I was not missed for half-an-hour—and the disabled bandit, who, in the absence of his companions, alone remained in charge of the encampment, was unequal to pursuit. Favoured by fortune, I took the path which enabled me to evade the gang when returning in the morning—and at daybreak I encountered a strong body of Neapolitan soldiers, who had been specially detached to exterminate a band, whose recent audacity had spurred an indolent police to action.

“From me they learned the place where the travellers who had been carried off were secreted. Canet, and his friend Bardinetti, had been anticipated in their intention of be-

traying their confederates—the tie that binds villany is loose—and the courier was a double traitor. The band had been denounced—a plan matured to secure their arrest—and while the scoundrel chief and his confederate plotted the betrayal of their companions, they were themselves betrayed. The mountain haunt was so completely surprised and surrounded, that the whole of its occupants were secured. A short imprisonment was followed by trial and conviction—the men were *garotted*—the women transferred for life to a penitentiary.

“ And did Canet escape the fate of his less guilty companions? Yes—none can account for the conflicting feelings which influence a woman's conduct—*I saved him!* The day for his execution was named—none ever dreamed that mercy to such a criminal could be extended—and the hours of his existence were numbered. Suddenly—unaccountably—the memory of what he had once been to me returned—his falsehood, his villany were

forgotten—I hurried to the Duke—five years had neither obliterated his recollection of my person, nor abated his gratitude—I saw him—sued, and succeeded—a public pardon dared not be extended—but all-powerful influence permitted an escape. The great criminal evaded death—and the less underwent its penalty.

“Of my subsequent adventures, a narration would be tedious—and to tell you, by what extraordinary circumstances I became a visiter to England and the companion of Pauline would now be irrelevant. Canet’s subsequent career, after he escaped the *garotte*, I can conjecture only from the revelations we overheard. Doubtless, the villanous art he had acquired in a Neapolitan prison was turned to good account—and natural abilities enabled him to assume the character of a gentleman, and to procure an *entrée* into society, and an opportunity to plunder the unwary. In Pauline he had an unscrupulous confederate—and his inimitable talent as a cheat, assisted by her

personal attractions, no doubt effected the ruin of many an unsuspecting victim. The conversation we overheard proves that from the common results of criminal life Canet and his companion were not exempted. My confessions have been sufficiently extensive for the purposes intended—you know the motives which actuate the vile associates—and, consequently, the extent of the danger that threatens. In marring their plans and saving you, I best attain the only object I live for—Revenge!”

“As she spoke, the clock chimed.

“Ha!—time passes—and in a quarter of an hour I meet my honoured lord. By which of his numerous titles shall I designate him? Murderer—cheat—bandit—convict. No—no—these sound harshly. Jules Canet?—’tis a plebeian appellation—and so, *Count d’Arlincourt*, I shall attend you presently.”

“And, dear Carlotta, what course will you pursue? I inquired.

“Effect your deliverance first. That is

the mortal blow which dissolves the guilty compact, was her cold reply, and then expose the villanous confederacy to each other. Ah! Pauline! you little dreamed that the secret passage that love devised should serve the purposes of hatred—or that he who deceived, and was in turn deceived, should, from your own lips, learn the full extent of your worthlessness! Hark! the chimes again!—Count d'Arlincourt, I hasten to my meeting, and—my revenge!”

“ She said, and quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ESCAPE—MUTUAL SUSPICIONS.

Isabel.—With an outstretched throat, I'll tell the world
Aloud, what man thou art.

Angelo.—Who will believe thee, Isabel ?

Measure for Measure.

“ The hour—the most important of a young life was at hand, when the trial should be made on which my future happiness or misery was dependent. Under ordinary circumstances, to have united my fortunes to one so little known as the wild adventurer I had selected, would have been a rash and culpable experiment ; but, marked as I was, a victim to be offered at the shrine of villany—plundered by him who should have protected me—and, in

accordance with criminal arrangement, committed to the arms of a felon to recompense successful fraud, any alternative was preferable, and my only hope of evading a hated union with a wretch so steeped in guilt as Carlotta's revelations had proved Canet to be rested in my contemplated escape. Every time the clock chimed, my heart beat, and my colour rose and faded — for every stroke seemed to knell the approaching crisis of my fate. Susan, who was to be the partner of my flight, vainly endeavoured to reassure and nerve me for the trial. Alas! her efforts were unsuccessful—and a presentiment of impending calamity was not to be dispelled.

“ An hour elapsed, and Carlotta returned. The interview with her felon husband had been anything but peaceful—for the expression of her countenance indicated that the wildest passions which rack the bosom, had in hers been recently and furiously excited.

“ To the inquiry I made regarding what had occurred, an impatient movement of

her hand, and the words, 'Villain! villain!' muttered in a tone which spoke undying hatred, convinced me that had aught been wanting to confirm eternal hatred against one whom she had saved, and to whom all that woman values had been sacrificed, that evening interview had effected.

"The chimes were heard again—*twelve* sounded from the clock-tower—and, before the bell had ceased to vibrate, a muffled figure glided from a clump of evergreens, and, clapping his hands together, gave the appointed signal. One glance satisfied the eyes of love—it was the Ranger!

"To reach the garden undiscovered—pass through the private door leading out upon the heath—mount horses in waiting beyond the walls, and leave the deserted château and its vile inhabitants—and, as I hoped, for ever — was successfully accomplished. Carlotta witnessed the escape with marked satisfaction; and, having arranged with my lover the means by which she could speedily

and safely communicate with him, she embraced Susan and me, and commended us to the keeping of the saints.

“ ‘ And now once more, farewell !’ she said, in a voice which showed that natural kindness of disposition was blended with the more violent passions which are common to southern temperaments. ‘ I have done a deed of mercy, and saved the innocent—now, for an act of justice. The train is laid already—the hand to fire it is only wanting—mine shall apply the match—guilt shall be hounded against guilt—and, by their own means, those who wronged Carlotta shall satisfy, to its fullest extent, the vengeance of insulted love.’

“ At the path which led from the high road to the beach, we were joined by two other strangers, who, like him who had held the horses at the garden-gate, were friends or attendants on the Ranger. We rode for several hours at a fast pace, and generally through by-roads, until at daybreak we quitted the beaten path, and entered a wild and

secluded valley—it was immediately beside the coast—for, through a ravine in the hill-side, the sea was visible.

“ In a cultivated hollow, which formed a striking contrast to the bleak and heathy moors by which it was environed, four or five sod-built cottages, thatched with heather, showed that the valley was inhabited. Judging from appearances, the occupants of these humble dwellings united a fisher's with a pastoral life—nets were hanging up to dry—oars and fish-baskets were lying beside the cottages—the women were engaged in clearing and baiting lines—and the children in herding sheep and goats upon the hills, or carrying peats from the moor. One thing surprised me—considering the limited number of houses—if hovels, fitter to shelter cattle than accommodate human beings, might be so termed—there was a superabundant population of one sex, while not a man was visible. The Ranger explained the cause; the avocation of fishermen required them to be all

night on sea, and they retired to repose, when those engaged in the ordinary pursuits of life were rising to commence their labours.

“ The hut to which I was conducted by my lover was nearly as humble in its external appearance as those I have described, but within care had evidently been employed to render it comfortable. The walls had been whitewashed—and, though the furniture was of the humblest character, everything was remarkably clean. A young peasant-girl had been engaged to attend upon me—and, with Susan as a companion when my lover was from home, I felt my mountain abode a paradise, when I remembered the house of vice and luxury I had quitted, and the terrible destiny I had miraculously escaped.

“ A week elapsed, and oh ! what a happy week that was ! With my lover—to whom I daily became more devotedly attached—I wandered through the mountains, or, seated on a cliff that overhung the sea, watched the sun sink in the ocean and warn us that it was

time to seek an humble but happy home. There a cheerful turf fire and cottage supper was waiting our return—and, when the hour of repose arrived, William, whose conduct to me was marked with a delicacy which made me respect the man I loved, retired for the night to a neighbouring cabin, leaving us all in the conscious security a secluded life afforded.

“ I had consented freely to an immediate marriage, and William apprised me that he had made the necessary arrangements for its being celebrated on an early day. Our evening walk had ended—the light supper been removed—and, seated round a fire, heaped with drift-wood collected from the beach, whose brilliant blaze rendered candles unnecessary, we were expressing surprise that Carlotta had not redeemed her parting promise, and conveyed intelligence of what had occurred at the château after my escape had been discovered.

“ ‘ Yes, love,’ said the Ranger, ‘ never did a bold attempt succeed more admirably—to spirit thee away when suspicion was lulled to sleep—not a dog growled—not a bird twittered—and, ere the vacant cage told that the captive was at liberty, here, safe from pursuit, I laughed to fancy the unavailing fury with which the Earl would receive the pleasing intelligence that the bride elect had flown, and left him the agreeable task of finding another consort for the felon he called friend. And yet the ease with which your deliverance was effected appears almost incredible. The alarm of the preceding night I feared would have naturally increased, instead of abating, as it did, the jealous vigilance of your guardian. I had prepared, however, for the worst—and twenty trusty companions were waiting my signal to effect by force what, fortunately, was achieved so well by stratagem. What a noble ally we found in her whom we had most cause to dread! Ah! Carlotta! would that the day

may come, when the Ranger can prove how much he owes thee.'

" 'Then, human nature is not all bad alike—and man can feel gratitude,' exclaimed a voice, and a woman stepped across the doorway.

" One glance told that the late visiter was Pauline's attendant. Had she doubted that the heart warms not to a benefactor, the ardour with which I caught her to my breast and the honest welcome of the Ranger would have removed suspicion.

" The fatigue incident to a long journey, which by the previous arrangements made by William, and with which she had been made acquainted, she had been enabled to perform with tolerable facility, was soon forgotten when she had rested and refreshed herself. The Ranger uncorked a flask of wine—the peasant-girl was dismissed for the night—the fire was heaped with wood anew—and with deep attention we listened, while Carlotta commenced a narrative of the events which

had occurred after our escape, and i
we were so deeply interested.

* * * * *

“After I bade you farewell, I list
a few minutes to assure myself that
met no interruption without the wal
the tread of the horses’ feet upon
was heard no longer, and I felt c
that the same good fortune which
you to quit the château undiscove
attended the commencement of your
On entering the house, a dead silen
vailed throughout the mansion—the
were all extinguished—and if the gu
sleep, the Earl and his villanous conf
were probably dreaming of dark
against one they deemed so compl
their power, but who now was happily
their reach. Wearied and agitated
occurrences of a day and night crowd
so much excitement, I undressed and
sleep — my heart lightened by the c
thought that for past offendings I had

the partial atonement which arises from an act of mercy.

“ The morning was far advanced when I awoke, and still nothing had occurred to create alarm, and apprise the infamous confederates that a helpless girl had outwitted them. An order from the lady of the château to gather some fresh flowers for her boudoir afforded me a good excuse for loitering in the shrubbery, into which the windows of the breakfast-room opened. The morning was warm, the casements were unclosed, and from a clump of evergreens I could distinctly hear and see all that passed within. Need I add that, as the moment of discovery approached, I felt an intensity of interest as to what should occur when the *dénouement* of the scene arrived.

“ Pauline, the Earl, and De Bomont were already assembled, but they were waiting for other guests, and had not sat down to breakfast. The Chevalier was looking carelessly over a book—the Earl standing with his back

to the fire, thoughtful, and, if the expression of the face could be believed, far from happy—and Pauline, who had evidently bestowed unusual pains upon her toilet, was culling a small bouquet from a bunch of flowers.

“ ‘What detains these people?’ said the Earl impatiently, as he turned round, and looked at the clock upon the mantelpiece.

“ ‘The Count, I presume,’ replied De Bomont, as he laid aside the book, ‘determined upon conquest, is sacrificing largely to the Graces, and the lady, as decided to decline the advances of the *preux chevalier*, is fortifying herself to offer a vigorous resistance to one, whose good taste in making love is only exceeded by the pureness of his motives, and the sincerity of his passion.’

“ ‘The fellow’s an ass, with all his impudence,’ returned the Earl: ‘to address, as he owned himself, an English gentlewoman with the coarse insolence which, with an Italian *intriguante* or a *modiste* of the Palais Royal might succeed, betrays his original vulgarity.

But come, send for the girl, madame—we'll see what vein she's in—women, as you know, Pauline, are rather changeable at times—mayhap the lady has reconsidered d'Arlincourt's proposals—and in her anxiety to obtain a husband, may, for want of better, commit matrimony with the Count. *Count!* pshaw! the scoundrel's nick-name half chokes me in the utterance.'

"The bell was rung — and the servant who answered its summons was desired to send Susan to her mistress, and tell her that her presence in the breakfast-room was waited for.

"I listened with breathless anxiety — the moment of discovery was at hand, and on whom would suspicion fall? Should I escape? No matter—I was ready to abide the worst.

"Five minutes elapsed — how long they seemed to me! At last the door opened, and François announced that Susan had been sought in vain.

" 'Ha!' exclaimed the Earl, with a sneer, 'yours seems to be a well-regulated house-

hold. Could you, signora,' and he bowed ironically to Pauline, 'procure one of the idlers I support, to bear a message from their master?'

"The lady felt the taunt, and with flashing eyes requested De Bomont to sound the bell, and when it was answered, she inquired 'Where Carlotta was?'

"'Gathering flowers in the garden,' was the reply.

"'Send her hither,' exclaimed the Earl.

"'Now comes my part in the drama,' I whispered to myself, and withdrawing myself from the clump which had sheltered me, I placed myself in François's path—received the command, and entered the presence-chamber.

"'Where is Susan?' inquired Pauline.

"'I'm sure I can't pretend to say,' I replied, with marked impertinence.

"'Who cares where Susan is?' exclaimed the Earl, with a contemptuous look at his quondam mistress. 'Go—tell Miss Meadows that breakfast waits.'

"I bowed respectfully to the Earl, and left the room—repaired to your chamber, the door of which I had carefully locked and removed the key—knocked and requested to be admitted. My demand was not attended to—I knocked again more loudly—remarked to the servants, whose curiosity were excited, that Miss Meadows's silence was very odd, or very obstinate—and, after a proper time, returned to the breakfast-room, and announced that I could not gain admittance.

" 'By Heaven! this is passing strange,' exclaimed the Earl, as, followed by De Bomont, he hurried along the corridor. Arrived at your apartment, he called you—and none answered. He tried the lock, but it was too well secured. A ladder was raised—entrance obtained through the window—the door unclosed. There stood the bed—no form last night had pressed it. The bird was flown!

" Darting a glance, in which rage and suspicion mingled, at Pauline, the look of unfeigned astonishment which it met at once

convinced him that she was as ignorant of this most unaccountable occurrence.

“ ‘Hell and fury!’ exclaimed the Earl. ‘What means this? Where is the lady?—she dead?—escaped?’”

“ A minute elapsed — none answered the Earl’s inquiry—for none but one could have done so. At that moment Canet entered the room.

“ ‘What means this rumour, my Lord?’ he said. ‘Where is the lady?—where is her wife?’ he asked with evident alarm.

“ ‘The devil alone can answer your question!’ was the angry and uncourteous reply.

“ ‘Come, come, my Lord,’ returned the Earl, whose suspicions had fallen upon Canet. ‘This will not do. ’Tis but a flimsy evasion to evade the performance of a solemn promise—and by—’

“ ‘Stop, fool!’ interrupted De Canet. ‘Mark ye, where you are? Peace! I need more information than yourself can give me.’”

“ ‘Oh, no,’ I said, taking an un-

part in the conversation. 'Forgive me, Monsieur le Chevalier, in differing with you. The Count—I never can recollect a title—has lost a wife it seems, while my lord has only lost a ward. Poor gentleman! for one so fond of matrimonial happiness, it must be indeed a serious affliction. Could not another be found, Count d'Arlincourt, to supply the place of her who was a bride but in expectancy?'

"As I spoke, my words were daggers to the whole. Pauline, conscious of the past, turned her eyes away. Canet's *hardiesse* abandoned him. Fearful of exposure, the Chevalier endeavoured to arrest the angry colloquy—while the Earl angrily desired me to be silent—and, after desiring a rigid search to be made, retired from a scene of indescribable confusion, —an example followed by his guests.

"The mine was sprung—of hatred, discord, and suspicion—the elements were abundant—my task was to use them unsparingly. The

Earl and his excellent associates had adjourned to the breakfast-room—and, while the grounds and garden were carefully, but unsuccessfully, searched by the domestics, a loud and intemperate discussion in the parlour served no better purpose than add to past irritation, and render a wide breach still wider. This angry and useless debate was suddenly terminated by the stout, red-faced man whom you encountered among the cliffs, presenting himself at the open window.

“ ‘How now?’ exclaimed the Earl. ‘Have you gained any intelligence, or found any traces of the fugitive?’

“ ‘No intelligence, my Lord,’ was the reply; ‘but the traces are abundant.’

“ ‘Go on—and what would you infer from them?’

“ ‘Why, that a cleverer escape has never been effected. Damn me! what a deep one the girl has proved!’ and Mr. Jenkins closed one eye.

“ ‘ You torture me. Out with the worst,’ exclaimed the Earl.

“ ‘ Well, I like to make all safe before I offer an opinion,’ returned Mr. Jenkins; ‘ and if I could be obliged with one of the lady’s shoes, in five minutes I’ll give your Lordship full particulars.’

“ A shoe was immediately brought — the stout stranger disappeared—his absence was but short—for within five minutes he presented himself again at the window. Before he spoke, the expression of face and eye told that his researches had been successful.

“ ‘ My Lord,’ said the stout stranger, ‘ the lady is clear away, and three persons assisted in the escape. *Two* were women—the *third* a man.’

“ ‘ Have you any suspicion, Jenkins, who they were?’

“ ‘ Why, yes, my Lord—I fancy this Susan, who has disappeared, was one of the party. The second female I cannot guess at. The man I know—’

“ ‘ Who ? ’ exclaimed several voices.

“ ‘ The Ranger—and that’s certain,’ was the reply.

“ ‘ The Ranger ! ’ exclaimed the Earl. ‘ Quick ! your reason for suspecting him.’

“ ‘ I don’t *suspect*, my Lord, because I’m sure. I have followed Will’s track too often across the sands, not to know his footstep when I meet it in a flower-bed.’

“ ‘ Then the footmarks,’ observed the Chevalier, ‘ induce you to believe that the fellow they call the Ranger has carried off the lady ? ’

“ ‘ No doubt of it,’ replied Mr. Jenkins. ‘ If any chap in England could dodge the devil himself, why Will’s the man. Ha ! ha ! Well, to think on it is funny. Why, the wench seemed safe as if she had been in the lantern of the Eddystone—and, blow me tight ! with half-a-dozen men around her—and sharp ones too—Will whisks her off, and, except his friend, old Beelzebub, no one can guess the way.’

“ ‘It is certain,’ observed the Chevalier, ‘that the lady is carried off. The only question worth inquiry is, how can she be recovered? You, Mr. Jenkins, who know the haunts and habits of this daring outlaw, can best tell the direction he most probably has escaped by, and thus enable Lord —— to find the place where his ward is concealed.’

“ ‘Ah!’ returned the stout stranger, with portentous wink. ‘It’s little you know of the Ranger’s movements. Here to-day, gone to-morrow—this evening chased off the coast—the next night beaching a cargo safe in the Dutchman’s cove, when every mortal soul believed that he had run back to Flushing. Bless ye! to talk of the Ranger’s haunts, or guess the direction he has taken—first fancy every glen and cavern for fifty miles around—and, as to his whereabouts—you might as well guess where the sea-gull you started from the cliff last night is likely to be found this morning.’

“ ‘ Five hundred pounds for her recovery !’ exclaimed the Earl, passionately.

“ ‘ Well, that’s coming to the point, my lord. I’ve in my day been lucky, and who knows what chance may do. I have found the place the fox broke cover—and d—n me if any man in England will do it—I’ll earth him ! I’m off, my lord. The sooner a fresh scent’s run the better.’

“ So saying, Mr. Jenkins bowed and disappeared.

“ The departure of the Earl’s myrmidon was the signal for fresh debate and fiery altercation. On Pauline, as the first cause of the embarrassing position in which the whole infamous confederacy were now so dangerously placed, the Earl’s anger was vented with unsparing severity—while, piqued to be lowered in the presence of her new protector, the lady defended herself with more warmth than skill from attacks which, under existing circumstances, were particularly wounding. Canet,

whose disappointment was measured entirely by mercenary motives, pressed for a pecuniary indemnity for his loss, and insisted that the Earl should pass him a security for £5000. This insolent demand was met by Lord —— by a haughty and sarcastic refusal—while the Chevalier—for some secret reason piqued with Pauline, and tired of the vulgar audacity of the pseudo Count—played anything but the peace-maker, and added to the confusion. One, however, fated to annihilate the crumbling elements on which the house of sand was built, was now about to figure in. Vengeance waits her time—I watched the crisis to strike the meditated blow—and I did not wait in vain.

“ In destroying the guilty purposes of the whole, and rendering their intended spoliation of yourself abortive, I had completely succeeded. The first lethal blow had been delivered, and to effect this was to overcome every difficulty—as to the rest, the cards were in my hand—the game at my disposal.

To denounce Canet — to expose Pauline — and, through both, to reach the Earl—all this I had the means to do. The time was come —and like him who holds the match, the cannon merely required my touch to explode the destructive elements with which it was surcharged.

“ The opportunity to carry out my revengeful determination was speedily presented. The Earl, accompanied by the Chevalier, entered the garden, and sauntered on to a covered alley in the remotest quarter of the grounds. I followed, and, could I judge by violent gesticulation, never was man in meeter frame for purpose such as mine, than Lord —. While they walked to the further termination of the alley, I remained ensconced at the other. They turned—retraced their steps—the Earl was in furious mood, which his cooler companion seemed unwilling or unable to soften down. As they approached my concealment, in reply to some observations of De Bomont, the Earl, in a storm of rage, returned—

“ ‘ Make terms with the scoundrel ! No, —no, De Bomont, never—*coute qui coute*.— By Heaven ! I won’t be bullied. Three thousand pounds, or public exposure ! I never grudged, as you know, a ruffian’s fee—but, in this case, a tithe of the demanded sum should pass through my fingers unwillingly. Could I only treat the fellow’s threat with cold derision — denude his infamy — hound him from England the felon I suspect, but cannot prove — were I to sell the very signet ring upon this finger, I would double the sum demanded by the ruffian, were it only to send him back the pauper you found him in the streets of London.’ ”

“ As the Earl spoke, he had reached the hazel-bush which had been my hiding-place ; and, before the words died on his lips away, I stepped from my concealment, and exclaimed,

“ ‘ My Lord, Earl—I take your offer.’ ”

DETECTION AND DISGRACE—THE RECAPTURE.

SHAKESPEARE.

“ ‘ So, madam, you feel justified in listening to private conversations.

“ ‘ Yes, my lord ; and, as you may confess hereafter, have listened to some purpose.’ ”

“ ‘ Indeed !’ ”

“ ‘ Wherefore,’ said the Chevalier, ‘ have you obtruded thus upon his lordship and myself ?’ ”

“ ‘ To enable him,’ and I pointed to the Earl, ‘ without making the sacrifice of a louis-d’or, to be the master of the fate of one who beards and threatens him.’ ”

“ ‘ Proceed, good Carlotta.’ ”

“ ‘ I overheard you, my lord, complain that you were in the power of a scoundrel. What would you give her, who could prove d’Arlincourt a swindler—a mere cheat ?’ ”

“ ‘ Not a sous,’ was the cold reply. ‘ That discovery has been made already.’ ”

“ ‘ Say that I called him murderer !’ ”

“ ‘ Can you, by proof, bear out the accusation ?’ ”

“ ‘ No, my lord—that only could be obtained in a foreign country.’ ”

“ ‘ Bah !’ ejaculated the Chevalier. ‘ These

are mere assertions, girl!—the idle ebullitions of woman's jealousy.'

" ' Yet, patience. Would condemnation to the galleys for life suffice your purpose, Earl?'

" ' Nobly. Prove your words true—and one hundred guineas shall reward you.'

" ' My lord—I make no terms.'

" ' What proof can you produce?'

" ' Stay yet. Could it be shown that, for a second time, a convicted criminal, he had been sentenced to the garotte?'

" ' Nay—nay. This would indeed be almost needless. The galleys will suffice. But mere assertion is insufficient—and proof alone can substantiate the charge. Were that to be had, Count d'Arincourt, thy threats and thee were despicable alike!'

" ' Then, my good lord, upon that insolent adventurer you may turn your unmeasured contempt. Forgive me. Pauline has been your mistress—lives under your protection—although love, as men call passion, is gone—

I presume you count something upon her gratitude?"

"The Earl coloured to the brows. He bit his lip. The Chevalier marked his agitation, and with assumed indifference observed—

" 'What do you mean, Carlotta? Those idle questions disturb his lordship. You would not insinuate that aught in Madame d'Arville's moral conduct has been objectionable?"

" 'I would not insinuate,' was my reply; 'I would assert.'

" 'What!' shouted the Earl.

" 'That Pauline has deceived you. Here, abroad—while living under your protection—or when supported by your bounty.'

" 'Proof!' exclaimed the Earl, 'proof! The woman's head is weak, but I believe the heart is sound.'

" 'What proof would be deemed sufficient?' I asked.

" 'Aught,' returned the Earl, 'which bore

the mark of truth upon it — for rumour I turn no ear. What proof can I adduce to show me that Pauline, who she may be, is also criminal? and that an act has been committed which renders me unworthy of my further protection?"

" 'Would the evidence of your own eyes convince your lordship?'

" 'That were hard to arrive at, my lord. Such proofs are scarcely possible, and I must suffice.'

" 'Within one hour you shall have my answer. Return to the breakfast-room—announce to you and the Chevalier are going to the city to seek intelligence of the fugitives — take care of your horses—return—meet me here in half an hour; then, if I fail in ample proof, write me and I will be an impostor.'

" 'Enough! you promise fair. Fulfill your pledge, and command my everlasting gratitude.'

"So said the Earl; and, accompanied by his friend De Bomont, he proceeded

the lady and her companion—the disappointed bridegroom.

“Short as the time was, on the present occasion, that the party remained together in the parlour, it was spent in reproach on one side, and recrimination on the other. The unexpected escape of his intended victim—the mystery in which it was involved—the absence of every clue which might lead to a discovery, and place the fugitive and her fortune in his power again—all this to Canet was maddening—while, in full assurance that from me he would obtain the means of crushing an insolent adventurer, the Earl’s bearing to the pseudo Count became even more haughty and sarcastic than before. No wonder then that, after our interview in the garden, the relations of the parties, bad as they had been, were rendered even worse.

“I saw the horses brought to the door, and the Earl and De Bomont depart, and the result I had calculated on followed. In half an hour Pauline retired to her private

apartment, accompanied by the Count—a French attendant, who had succeeded me in the duties of the toilet first received orders to watch the turn, and instantly announce it to him.

“It is surprising how contradictory opinions and impressions of men will be occasionally. None held the moral of women in lower estimation than I did, and yet, one whose character and conduct required the most charitable construction, had blinded himself to her errors, and persuaded him that his personal attachment to himself was true and undivided. The very idea of that a heart he fancied all his own, and wander for a moment, had wounded his vanity, and stung him to the quick. The imputed inconstancy of his mistress pained him more deeply than the conduct of his ward. In such a mood I met him by a private door he gained admission to the garden with his friend the Chevalier.

amid a storm of curses, which accompanied every disclosure which I made, I narrated the secret history of Pauline's infidelity, and offered instantly to substantiate my accusation, by giving damning evidence to prove her guilt. I need not add, that my overture was eagerly embraced.

“ ‘My lord,’ said the Chevalier, ‘had you not better commit this unpleasant office to me? Your feelings may be excited beyond control—and a premature discovery might render the full exposure of the guilty less complete?’

“ ‘No, De Bomont, fear nothing. Trifles may at times disturb my temper; but, if half what this girl asserts be true, my wrath towards that treacherous wretch shall remain concentrated and concealed, until the full measure of her infamy is established — and vengeance, like the stroke of the riven thunderbolt, shall descend upon the arch deceiver.’

“ Without observation, we entered the private door of the château, and silently I con-

ducted the Earl and his friend to the secret closet, which guilt designed, without suspecting that it would be used to expose the infamy of the guilty. Revenge like mine was cautious as it was deadly—my plans were deliberate—I had thickly carpeted the floor — and with noiseless steps placed the Earl within a few paces' length of the woman he had loved, and the man I once idolised.

“I led the Earl to a fissure in the door, while De Bomont placed himself before the other. One glance at those within was withering, and every limb of my companion seemed convulsed. There, on Canet's knee, while her arm encircled his neck, Pauline was sitting—his arm was round her waist — and, like a love-sick bride, she parted the ringlets from his brow, and kissed his forehead playfully.

“ ‘Nay, dearest Henri, let not this girl's loss afflict thee so. Although we may not have the wealth we anticipated, will we not be rich in love? Oh! how I long for the

hour to arrive, when the wide sea shall separate me from the haughty tyrant I detest, and restore me to the only arms I ever felt happy in—thine own !’

“I need not pursue the conversation. Canet dwelt upon the disappointment of seeing the towering edifice he had raised prostrated by a blow from some invisible hand, and in a manner equally unexpected and unaccountable. Pauline’s former passion for her lover had returned with increasing ardour, and, to judge from her language, the *transport d’amour* seemed rather the first love of fifteen, than the sombre attachment which the heart evinces when maturer judgment corrects its wilder impulses. Canet, in every word, appeared the mercenary villain — while Pauline left it a doubtful question to decide, whether in her worthless disposition folly or falsehood predominated.

“A slight tap upon the door of the boudoir interrupted the *tête-à-tête*, and the lady admitted the intruder. It was Franchette—she

had heard the tread of horses' feet outside the garden-wall — and hastened to apprise her mistress.

“ ‘ Go, good Franchette, and tell me when the Earl returns. Henri, dearest, be not thus cast down—think only of past happiness, and why should not our future be equally felicitous? Remember those elysian hours we passed together at Palermo, when I transmitted to my island tyrant epistles written with thy dear arm around me. My letters were laden deep with tears, and prayers, and kisses—while his, in return, brought back a draft upon his banker, and a tender remonstrance imploring me not to break my heart. Dull fool ! I had none to break—it was all thine own. But come—we must separate. I will retire to complete some necessary preparations for our journey. Addio, my beloved.’

“ It was fortunate that Franchette's intelligence had brought the interview to a close, for more than once the fury of the Earl was on the point of explosion. Unconsciously,

while concealed in the closet, he had held my hand in his — and when Pauline detailed her past infamy, and lavished endearments upon his low-born rival, the pressure of a hand tremulous with suppressed passion told the desperate conflict that was raging in his bosom, and the yearning after instant vengeance which delay would render still deadlier.

“The boudoir had been deserted several minutes before silence was broken, and the Chevalier was the first to speak.

“‘My lord,’ he said, ‘is this a dream, or is it reality?’

“‘De Bomont, I have through life been slow of faith,’ was the reply; ‘but, for the future, I will credit anything. One thing astounds me more than all I have seen and all I have overheard—and, had an angel whispered it before, I could not have believed it.’

“‘Indeed, my lord, and what may that be?’

“‘That I did not burst upon the strumpet

and her paramour, and murder them on the instant. Twice my foot was raised to dash the door in which divided me from those I longed to annihilate.'

" 'My lord,' returned the Chevalier, 'you have controlled your temper wisely. A short delay will only fill the measure of just revenge to overflow.'

" 'That thought alone, de Bomont, enabled me to view my own degradation calmly. Degradation! Hell and furies! the word's too mild. Had I been deserted for one equal in rank or position to myself — nay, for one of humble birth and lowly calling, were it but an honest one! But to be dishonoured by a cheat, a criminal, a galley slave!' He paused for breath — then, turning to me, he caught my hand. 'Carlotta — one pledge you have well redeemed — and Pauline, at last, I know thee! Prove Canet what he is, and for life I am thy debtor, girl.'

" 'Fear not, my lord,' I replied. 'In this case, too, my promise shall be realised. But

I have a pledge on your part to demand, and what I require I trust will be conceded.'

" 'If 'tis money, name the sum! Aught in reason shall be yours.'

" 'Oh, no, my lord — you are mistaken — no mercenary motive—and, may I add without offence, no personal respect for you has influenced me in what I have done, and what I am about to do. Insult, ingratitude, contempt, have spurred me to take vengeance on those who wronged me. I have been criminal — criminal through the vicious influence of a wretch — but blood is not upon my hands. Let none be shed now. Promise, my lord, that you will limit your thirst for vengeance. Through me, you shall trample upon him who has dishonoured you—but tread not the worm to death.'

" 'Dread nothing, girl. Did an equal rival me, I might wipe out the injury in blood. But no—to denude this felon upstart—that will be indeed the best revenge. Shall I have the means of doing so?'

“ ‘To the fullest extent of your wishes. When the time arrives, and you wish to apprise Pauline that she is known, and Canet that he is denounced, call me to your presence. One word, my lord—the attendance of some of your male domestics will be necessary—and let it be done without exciting suspicion.’

“ ‘Enough—I expect Jenkins presently,’ said the Earl; ‘and, under the pretext of devising measures for the recovery of your fugitive ward, he and his two companions can be introduced to the parlour when the proper time arrives,’ observed De Bomont.

“ I led the Earl and his friend from the secret closet to the garden—and, without incurring the slightest suspicion, they entered the hall of the château, as if returned from a ride.

“ The hour of retribution was at hand—he who had despised, and she who had deceived, were both within the power of a vindictive woman — and to enhance the stunning effect

of the stroke impending, both were unconscious that mischief was intended. Pauline had employed every art to add to her attractions—while Canet had calculated the lowest indemnity he would accept for his disappointment—and, should his demand be rejected, had arranged the means which should coerce the Earl, and, to avoid exposure, induce him to save character by monetary sacrifice.

“The hour for meeting in the drawing-room before dinner arrived, and the Earl’s valet knocked at the door of my apartment, and gave the expected summons. I obeyed it—and, on entering the room, found the Earl and his guests, with Mr. Jenkins and his two companions. Pauline was sumptuously dressed, and looked magnificently—the Earl was ominously calm—De Bomont, as he ever was, cool and impenetrable—Canet was evidently piqued and out of humour—for Jenkins, on his return from a morning’s search, had annouced that not a trace of the fugitives could be found, while the Earl

listened with an apathetic indifference, which led the self-styled Count to believe that the bride he had been promised had been removed and not run away with.

“‘My lord,’ he said, in a tone of voice which he intended should be significant of more than the words conveyed, ‘we must understand each other better before bed-time.’

“‘Monsieur le Conte’ — and the title hissed through his closed teeth ironically — ‘why wait for bed-time? Before dinner, if it suit you, gallant sir.’

“‘Ah! my lord—a quarrel to release a promise is but a clumsy trick.’

“‘And needs neither the manipulation of cards or dice,’ was the biting retort.

“‘I saw Canet’s cheeks redden.

“‘Your lordship, of course, is ignorant of such practices, nor would you keep company with those who know them.’

“‘Oh yes,’ observed the Earl, ‘I have met titled and untitled swindlers in my time

—but the Count d'Arlincourt will be incredulous—I have lately made a more extraordinary acquaintance ;’ and he made a pause.

“ ‘ Go on, my lord—with whom ?’

“ The Earl for a few moments eyed his interrogator from head to foot, and then, in a low, emphatic voice, slowly replied—

“ ‘ *With a galley-slave !*’

“ The face hitherto red with passion became deadly pale.

“ ‘ Mean you *me* ?’ he muttered.

“ ‘ *You !* Count d'Arlincourt—*alias* Jules Canet !’

“ ‘ ’Tis false as hell !’

“ ‘ True as the light of heaven !’ I exclaimed, and, stepping forward, confronted the criminal. ‘ Want ye proof, my lord ?’

“ ‘ Ay, Carlotta — proof ! proof !’ shouted the Earl.

“ ‘ The galley brand is on his shoulder—that of one condemned to the garotte upon his back.’

“ The words were scarcely uttered, until

a deep execration from the crowd; a malignant exclamation from the Earl; a general call, by Pauline, upon all to fly for protection, attested the sensation which had caused.

“ ‘Wretch!’ cried Canet, darting into his breast; ‘by all that’s dear to me, I could stab thee!’

“ ‘An easy task,’ I replied, ‘it would be for one who strangled an uncle to death.’

“ ‘A wife! Ha! ha! The fact that I performed that ceremony had a deal to do with myself—the monk was a deserter, and the marriage a mockery.’

“ ‘I dropped upon my knees, and thanked Heaven that no religious man would condemn me to the villain.’

“ ‘Once more, my lord,’ he said, ‘and under pain of the most degrading posture, I call on you to perform your duty. The false assertions of a cast-off I will laugh at.’

“ ‘Indeed!’ said the Earl, coldly: ‘to the proof! Off with the scoundrel’s clothes!’

“ The stout stranger had already been instructed in the duty he was to perform, and had taken a position behind the person he was previously directed to secure. The order had scarcely escaped the Earl’s lips, until Mr. Jenkins embraced Count d’Arlincourt so closely, as rendered any movement of the arms impossible, while one of his companions adroitly removed a short dagger from his breast.

“ ‘Bare the convict’s back,’ roared the Earl.

“ Pauline, who looked on in speechless astonishment, came now, as she fancied, to the rescue of her lover.

“ ‘My lord,’ she said, ‘surely in my presence you would not permit such an indelicacy to be committed.’

“ A cold, contemptuous look was the only reply he vouchsafed to her remonstrance; while his myrmidons, with more rapidity than

respect, removed the Count's coat, nuded the back of the convict.

“ ‘Excellent wench! thy intelligence true,’ exclaimed the Earl, as he took the light riding-cane that was laid upon the table. ‘There!’ and he placed the point upon the scoundrel’s shoulder, ‘there is the brand marked indelibly, and, faith!’ The cane was placed between Canet’s shoulder and the hangman’s writing is not a whit less legible. De Bomont, ’twould be a puzzle to read whether the record of galley or of the gallows is plainest. Stay—let me look again at the hangman’s brand for a hundred!’

“ ‘Would you permit *the Count* to be shaved and make his toilet?’ returned the Countess.

“ ‘*I, too*, must leave the room,’ exclaimed Pauline. ‘My lord, you forget that *the Countess* is present, and these unseemly displays are most disgusting.’

“ ‘I admit that truth, Pauline—nevertheless, for a minute detain you—one question answered, and I trouble you no more.’

you this Count, this cheat, this courier?—
what in the devil's name shall I call him?—
knew you him before?"

" ' Never, so help me, Heaven ! ' was the un-
blushing answer.

" ' Oh, then 'twas but a dream. Methought
—but how strange are phantasies?—I saw
you seated on his knee—your arm was round
his neck—nay, start not, bridle your vir-
tuous indignation for a moment—and he
had clasped your waist, too—nay, let me go on
—I fancied—'twas mere fancy, mark !—that
you spoke : Remember those elysian hours—
you murmured — we passed together at
Palermo, when I transmitted to my island
tyrant epistles written with thy dear arm
around me ; they were laden deep with tears,
and prayers, and kisses, while his in return
brought back a draft upon his banker.—Ha !
'twas but a dream ! ' "

" Surprised, confounded, the blood deserted
her cheeks, and she strove in vain to speak.
Now was my hour of triumph—I had waited

for revenge, and amply was my patience repaid.

“ ‘Nay, lady,’ I said, as I confronted her, ‘words will be only wasted—and I have saved you the trouble of explanation. The private passage Antoine, your former lover, constructed to reach your boudoir unnoticed, has of late been serviceable to more than me—for the Earl and his friend the Chevalier, and from her own confessions, too, have had an excellent opportunity of ascertaining the immaculate purity of—Madame d’Arville!’

“ ‘Then I am ruined!’ she murmured. ‘Wretch!’ and she darted a furious glance at me, ‘I will be revenged—you have betrayed me.’

“ ‘Oh, no—I only gave the Earl the private *entrée* to a lady’s chamber, which his secretary had found so convenient.’

“ ‘Villanous woman! Degraded even by my own domestic, too!’ shouted the Earl.

“ ‘Oh no, my lord,’ observed the Chevalier, ‘appearances are certainly against Madame

d'Arville, I admit—but still Antoine might have been only employed in transcribing the Palermo correspondence, and balancing the exact amount of the lady's tears and kisses, against your lordship's banker's bills.'

"A savage and sarcastic laugh from the Earl was elicited by the Chevalier's remark.

"The attack, however, stung Pauline; and, turning sharply on the speaker, she remarked, 'that Monsieur de Bomont had at last an opportunity of insulting with impunity a woman who had rejected his advances.'

"'Excuse me, lady,' he replied, 'I am too old, to seek for beauty in the bud like yours—too humble, to raise ambitious eyes to a woman once mated to one of the noblest peers in Britain—and too wise, to waste time in assailing a fortress that is impregnable.'

"The Earl broke in—

"'Nay, De Bomont, bandy no more words with a wretch beneath contempt. To your chamber, madame, and in three hours be

ready to quit the kingdom—in this you will find little difficulty; the preparations for your elysian excursion to Palermo will now be serviceable, and you shall have *Count d'Arincourt!* for a protector. Heaven forefend that I should separate two persons so admirably suited for each other—Jules Canet, the galley-slave—and Pauline d'Arville, the pattern of all that's excellent! Farewell, madame! *bon voyage!* At your earliest leisure, will you favour me with a few tears and kisses from Palermo?"

"The wretched woman rushed from the drawing-room, and the Earl retired with the Chevalier, no doubt to consult on the disposal of the guilty pair.

"That evening Canet, and the fellow he called servant, but who more probably was an accomplice, were conveyed by Jenkins and his attendants to the next town, whence they were allowed to find their way from the kingdom as they best could. The Earl's fury at Pauline's infidelity increased rather

than subsided—and he seemed to tax his ingenuity to render her disgrace more painful and humiliating. Suspecting, and with good reason, that Canet had renewed his connexion with a woman he had cast aside, only through interested motives, the Earl determined to remove all that could tempt the cupidity of a mercenary scoundrel—the valuable jewels he had presented to her when he fancied himself the all-engrossing object of her love were all reclaimed; and when she was sent away under Jenkins's charge, when he returned after escorting Canet to the post-town nearest to the château, I overheard the Earl observe with malicious bitterness to his friend, De Bomont—

“ ‘ Well, have I not given the Count an admirable opportunity of proving his disinterested affection for Pauline? And yet, I doubt, at times, whether the Palerman elysium would be less ecstatic with a roleau or two of louis d'ors, or the lady less welcome to Jules Canet, though burdened with a well-

filled jewel-case, and that equivalent for an amatory epistle—namely, a banker's bill.'

"A few words more, and my tale is told. To me the Earl behaved most generously, and I am thus enabled to return to my native valley, with a sufficient competence. Tomorrow, I resume my journey, my heart yearning after what was to me a home of innocence—and lightened at the thought, that I am no longer, even in belief, a felon's wife."

"Think you, Carlotta, that the Earl is still bent on my recovery?" I inquired.

"I believe it to be the first object of his existence. After an absence of three days, and late on the evening before I left the château, Jenkins suddenly returned, and, unannounced, entered the apartment where I was bidding the Earl a formal farewell.

" 'What news?' exclaimed his employer.

" 'Good, my lord,' was the reply. 'We're on the trace at last—the scent lies strong—

and before three days, the wench once more will be in your power.'

" ' Good news, indeed. Jenkins, thou hast seldom failed me at a pinch—and I trust to thy wit to remedy the infernal mischief which might have resulted from the silly girl's escape. Remember what I promised.'

" ' Fear not that I shall forget it,' returned the fellow with a grin. ' Five hundred pounds ! 'Tis noble payment, I allow. In one word, my lord, I have got the Ranger's track, and guess his whereabouts. Before three days, I shall have him, if he's over ground. Once close to him, why I suspect I shan't be far from the young lady.'

" ' Right. Don't let the scent get cool.'

" A look sufficiently expressive was all the reply Mr. Jenkins considered necessary, and I bade the Earl good night, and left them together.

" ' Ha !' said the Ranger, ' we must be on the alert. To-morrow, Mary, I must remove thee elsewhere — the day after makes thee

mine—and then, Lord Earl! armed with a husband's rights, look to thyself! But it is late, and Carlotta needs repose. To bed!—Heaven bless and guard thee, love!

“Bidding our guest a warm good night, and pressing me with an unusual ardour to his breast, William quitted the cabin. My eyes followed him as he disappeared. It was fated to be a last look!

“Half an hour elapsed—the secluded glen was buried in repose—for at nightfall, the men had launched their boats and gone to sea—and the women and children, as was their custom, had retired to their humble resting-places. We were about to undress, when a hasty footstep arrested our attention. Next moment, a voice without called for admission—and when Susan unclosed the door, a woman rushed wildly in. She was the bearer of disastrous news. William had been seized by a band of armed men who called themselves a press-gang—forced on board a boat—and carried off to a vessel

lying in the offing. I screamed, and flew out upon the heath, intending to run to the beach, and ascertain my lover's fate—but, before I had taken a dozen steps, a man seized me in his arms.

“ ‘Tis herself!” exclaimed the well-remembered tones of the stout stranger. I gazed wildly round—two horsemen were beside me—and in a moment I was lifted before one of them, who trotted briskly off with a now lifeless burden—for I had fainted. When I recovered, I found myself several miles from the glen from which I had been carried away—and in the custody of men whose appearance at once told me I was again in the power of the Earl. We journeyed rapidly, and by unfrequented paths, until late the succeeding evening I reached my destination. Oh God! what a fate was mine! The cottage, that love had made his home, was exchanged for—a madhouse!”

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION OF THE OUTCAST'S STORY — I ADVERTISE FOR
A WIFE, AND AM HONOURED BY A FEW REPLIES.

Risk. Who, pray, may the lady be?

Beldair. Apelles might be proud to draw her.

Risk. Is she so lovely then to see?

Beldair. Upon my soul, I never saw her!

Love laughs at Locksmiths.

“ I must briefly bring my story to a close,” said the outcast. “ To my inquiry touching the Ranger's fate, Miss Meadows expressed her total ignorance. During her long confinement, communion with the world had ceased entirely, for all that passed without the prison walls was perfectly unknown to any of its wretched inmates. After two or three interviews, in one of which the Earl

proposed another union, which the lady as peremptorily rejected, he declined to hold further personal communication in future—and any message he thought fit to send his captive ward, was conveyed through his infamous agent, the poisoner.

“On one occasion, that scoundrel obscurely remarked, that ‘the worm who had crawled across the Earl’s path was crushed into nothingness.’ The person alluded to was no doubt the Ranger—but what the occurrence was which the keeper hinted to was quite a mystery. Her own belief led her to infer that an enemy so dangerous had been removed; and that, by death, Lord —— had freed himself from one whom his own conscience whispered he had every cause to regard as an hereditary and immitigable enemy.

“But my gloomy tale wearies you, and I shall pass some immaterial details, and give you its sad *denouément*.

“For several weeks, Miss Meadows and

I resided in humble lodgings at an obscure farmhouse, and that a warmer feeling than friendship should arise between persons so singularly brought together, and so similarly circumstanced so far as adverse fortune went, may easily be accounted for. There was a melancholy feeling associated with this ill-fated lady, that insensibly changed compassion into love, and I proposed that one destiny should be ours, and that we should share the goods and ills of life together. The offer of protection, even so wretched as mine, to one so desolate was desirable. She hesitated, but accepted it. The truth was afterwards fatally disclosed — six years had not obliterated her deep attachment for the Ranger—and, though dead, the memory of a first and ardent love painfully returned.

“The day was fixed; and, as the intervening hours wore away, I observed that my promised bride became more nervous and desponding. She saw that her melancholy

pained me, and strove to overcome it. The struggle was vain—for even in the presence of the living lover, the image of the dead presented itself. I respected her sorrow, and the constancy with which first love was cherished raised Mary in my estimation, and made me more anxious to gain a heart whose affections had stood the test of time, and was so well worth winning.

“ The day at last arrived—oh, God ! will it ever be forgotten ! The place where the fortunes of two friendless beings like us were to be united indissolubly was in perfect keeping—for of village churches it was, I think, the lowliest in England. We presented ourselves at the altar—the words which bound us eternally were spoken—and the blessing was pronounced. Mary with difficulty had made the necessary responses to the clergyman—her voice was tremulous—and her cheeks pale as the old monument which stood beside us.

“ I pressed the kiss of marriage upon her

bloodless lips, when a low continued groan immediately behind caused both to look round hastily. A tall and powerful young stranger, dressed in the plain costume of a gentleman, but whose sunburnt features and bronzed hands betrayed the action of a tropic sun, leaned against a pillar that supported the gallery, and bent his eyes upon the bride, as if his whole soul was concentrated in the look. A thought like lightning crossed my mind—it was the Ranger !

“ Miss Meadows’s eyes had followed mine, and my suspicion touching the stranger received instant and fatal confirmation. She shrieked one word — ‘ William ! ’ — and fell back in my arms—dead !

“ The sensation this fearful occurrence caused cannot be described. Three or four peasant-girls, whom curiosity had brought to the church to witness a bridal ceremony, flew to the assistance of one removed now beyond earthly misfortune. For my part, the blow, unexpectedly delivered, fell with astounding

force, and every energy was paralysed. Not so the stranger. With perfect physical and mental power he stepped forward, and took the dear departed in his arms. All stared in wonder, but none interrupted him—as he laid his lips to hers.

“ ‘ Cold, already !’ he murmured. ‘ Well, Mary, nought remains but to avenge thee. *Two* visits—and at long intervals—have I paid to a father’s murderer and thine—the *third* and last shall be made more speedily.’

“ Again he pressed the bloodless lips of the dead bride — replaced the body in the arms of the peasant-girl, and strode from the church—unknown, unquestioned, and, but by me, unsuspected.

“ Over the melancholy *finale* of a tragic scene I draw the curtain—and what followed is merely conjecture. The third morning after the funeral of one who was and was not a wife, the Earl of ———, and his wretched confederate, the poisoner, were found dead in

a remote corner of the park. The villanous ally of Lord —— had perished by a pistol-shot—the Earl had been stabbed to the heart. It was said that to the body of the latter a placard had been attached, and the name of the murderer been boldly affixed to it. Startling, however, as the occurrence was, it was not only wrapped in mystery—but no pains were taken, after a few days' demonstration of activity, to ascertain the perpetrator of this double murder."

"And what was the Ranger's fate?" I inquired.

"Heaven alone can tell," was the outcast's reply. "If still existing, his career may have been like my own—a tangled web, in which misery predominated; now and again made more wretched by some feeble gleam of passing sunshine. One happy era in my life occurred—I married a gipsy, and joined the wanderers—two years I led a merry life—snared hares—made baskets—and, when I rose in the morning, neither could guess the

dinner-hour exactly, nor the place where I should sleep at night.

“Well, it was a careless and a happy epoch in my existence—too happy to please my evil genius, I got drunk, was crimped, sent to the Peninsula, wounded, deserted, and discharged. Like greater heroes, my military deserts passed unrewarded—the crime was made a set-off against the wound—I was landed at Portsmouth—turned adrift upon the world without a rap—and told to bless God and Colonel O’Callaghan, for balancing my account so mercifully. Hither have I made my way in search of my bereaved consort—and whether during three years she has played Penelope, and rejected conjugal consolation, is a doubt—but, should my worst fears be confirmed, as I have already withstood two matrimonial visitations manfully, with the aid of ‘rum and true religion,’ I may manage to survive a third. Excuse me, sir—I’ll drink your health at parting, and

then resume my march with a stouter heart, thanks to your hospitality."

He said, finished his brandy and water at a draught, and rose to leave the room. I placed a sovereign in his hand.

"Money! and gold too!" he exclaimed. "For three years I have not been owner of so much. Farewell! I'll neither bless nor thank you — no, I'll repay the favour better — I have run the round of life — started Lord ——'s son-in-law elect, and ended in marrying a gipsy. When you become a broken man — credit gone — the last shilling in the corner of your pocket — and the last friends answer 'Not a home' — what do you intend to do?"

"You have drawn an agreeable picture, which, however, I do not intend to realize; but should I ever be in the pleasant position you have sketched, I'll neither make application to my friends, nor experimentalise upon the highway."

"And what will you do?" inquired the wanderer.

"Precisely what you did when you abandoned your brown Penelope—list!"

"Bah!" exclaimed the outcast; "occupy that semblance of a coffin — a sentry-box — be caned by the sergeants—cursed by the officers—confined to barrack if you cough upon parade — and pack-drilled if you miss tattoo. Pish! go to the West Indies at once, and sell your person regularly. No, no—be free—turn gipsy — inquire for me—and I'll give you an introduction."

He said — gave me a wink and bow — opened the door — and passed the window whistling.

"What a strange wretch it is!" I murmured, as he disappeared. "Marvellous determination — courage which sets fortune at defiance—the hero blended with the black-guard—the union of qualities opposite as the Antipodes. Hamlet, thy mad philosophy was true, 'What a piece of work is man!'"

"Mary!" exclaimed a voice in the passage, and with that ominous name the dream of sentiment dissolved.

I rang the bell, discharged the bill, mounted my horse, and reached "mine inn" in safety—agonised, however, in every village which I passed by some infernal organ-grinder delivering himself of a popular ballad, in which the name of "Mary" formed "the burden of the song."

At the remotest extremity of Limmer's coffee-room, I sat at the corner of a table, oppressed with the deepest melancholy. Here I was in the modern Babylon, with five weeks' leave of absence unexpired, nothing to do, and a hundred pounds in my pocket. I was so unfortunately comfortable, moreover, that I had nothing to annoy me. On the preceding Christmas I had paid my tailor's bill—and it was whispered that my boot-maker had named me to a brother "gentleman of the sword," who had given him for three years' practical instruction in book-

keeping, as a paragon of punctuality. Well, what was to be done? If I returned to the regiment, everybody would ask me, "What the devil brought me back?" As to my having paid my tailor, were I bold enough to hazard the assertion, all—as a matter of improbability—would disbelieve me, and with Irish gentlemen I should forfeit *caste*. Still, here I was in a dead fix, uncomfortable and independent. I took up the morning papers — nothing but filthy politics — Daniel the Liberator was abusing the world at large — and in return the world abused him heartily. At last I picked up the *Sunday Times* — the first things that met my eye were three advertisements, headed "Matrimony." A thought rushed across my mind — why should I not try my fortune? I now knew women well — to be sued, and not be the suitor, how novel — how delightful! In a moment the thought conceived was executed — I seized a pen — and in ten minutes announced, in sporting parlance, that I was open to connubial overtures,

and the intimation was thus delicately expressed.

“MATRIMONY.

“A gentleman, aged twenty-six, of high family and moderate fortune, the member of an honourable profession, whose education has been liberal, and whose personal appearance, he flatters himself, will not be objected to, wishes to form a matrimonial engagement with a lady of suitable position in society. To render that state of human happiness supremely felicitous, the advertiser conceives that external advantages with mental accomplishments in woman should be combined. If fortune on the lady's part should be super-added, it will form no particular objection. It may be necessary to add, that the fullest explanations will be given and required.

“Widows ineligible — applicants not to exceed twenty-five.

“Address X. Y. Z., Post Office, Store Street, London.”

I fancied that no improvement could be

made upon this manifesto, and at once delivered it at the office for advertisements, and duly it appeared, heading the flank column of the sabbatical *Times*. No rival divided public attention—it was “alone in its glory”—and I the only matrimonial candidate in the field.

On Tuesday evening twenty-three letters, addressed X. Y. Z., were faithfully delivered to order—and then, alas! I discovered that I had made an important omission. “Communications, post paid,” had been forgotten—and of that error, I lament to add, country correspondents took an unladylike advantage. It may be as well to remark, that Rowland Hill's penny reformation was still in embryo, and that all unwedded gentlewomen who could muster a sheet of paper seemed unanimous in a determination of trying their luck.

To particularise a tithe of the letters I received would be endless. The moods of the fair sex, they say, are varied. This may be

true—and to judge from the method of their wooing, I believe it.

The angler's flies were not more frequently changed on an inauspicious fishing-day to seduce the wayward trout, than feminine artifice was employed to lure me into matrimony. Some overtures were brief and business-like, others more sentimentally conveyed. One lady had a warm heart, and played the piano—another, a thriving business in an improving thoroughfare—and, thank God, nobody could call upon her for a shilling. Numerous were applicants with pleasing manners and elegant address—gentlewomen were not wanting, who possessed that quiet and domestic disposition, which is best suited to ensure a husband's comforts; some flattered themselves that their personal appearance would be found agreeable, and others declared it to be their fixed determination to make their fortunate possessors happy as the day was long. More than one fair suitor for my hand modestly

affirmed that in her proper person were concentrated the cardinal virtues—and the whole lot, without exception, were the sweetest-tempered ladies in existence — impassive to the grossest abuse—and if lallopped thrice a day, they would meekly kiss the rod.

But, before I favour the gentle reader with a few specimens of this interesting correspondence, I must acquaint him that sundry of the epistles I received were anything but complimentary. By a limitation of age, and the total exclusion of widows, I had evoked the fury of these formidable sisterhoods — and, by antiquated virgins, and ladies who had experienced matrimonial felicity, and were ready to resume the hymenial chain again, the phials of their indignation were drained upon my unhappy head. “You stupid fool,” observed a pleasant gentlewoman, who wrote herself “forty-three,” “you want a green girl, forsooth! Oh! what an ass the man must be! Had you sought female charms in full maturity, united to

maternal care, I might have been weak enough to have given your proposal a favourable consideration." In a postscript, she remarked "that if I had been drunk when I wrote the advertisement, and addressed a line to A. B., 167, Star Street, she might compassionately oblige me with an interview."

The widow's letter, however, was a stinger. It is said that a man's character may be judged by the style of his handwriting. If a lady's may, I shall only remark that the widow's epistle was what Tony Lumkin would term "a d—d crabbed piece of penmanship."

"And so 'widows are ineligible.' You good-for-nothing wretch! it would be difficult to decide whether in you folly or malignity predominate. You are not a man, but a monster. To insult an estimable and unfortunate class, in whom the ripened beauty of woman combines sweetly with the matron's dignity and discretion! What a wretch! Cut off widows from the chance of matrimony with an uncereemonious P.S., as a publican advertises for a potboy, and adds, 'no Irish need

apply.'” After a jobation of two pages, a change came over the spirit of the lady. “Could I consider that this silly and offensive postscript was inconsiderately added to a letter I own most sensible, I might personally explain the extent of your offence. I shall be in the Soho Bazaar at two o'clock tomorrow. I wear a black mantilla and velvet bonnet—and, to prevent mistakes, will have a sheet of music in my hand.”

What a beautiful alternative lay in this double proposition! To be clutched by virgin hands, *anno ætatis*, forty-three—or grasped by a desperate matron, determined to storm the altar of Hymen, a second time. Oh no, ladies! I'll give your whereabouts a wide berth, and take care your neither catch me in Star Street nor the bazaar.

As these were the first of the voluminous correspondence lying on the table, the alarming nature of their contents half inclined me to throw the remainder, unopened, in the fire. But, after dinner, and nerved by a bottle of old port, I took courage and proceeded.

Number *three* was straightforward, intelligible, and unobscured by matrimonial diplomacy. No contingent remainders were hinted at—no reversionary illusions were held out. It was plain—and, as the fair writer was pleased to spell it, “to the pint.”

It stated that the applicant was an orphan, and had succeeded to £400 in the funds, and a greengrocery establishment doing a snug business. Women were liable to be imposed upon—the errand-boy had collected money and ran away; and Henrietta Timmins—for she did not beat about the bush, but freely gave her name—had come to the resolution to end celibacy at once, and secure marital protection. If I meant what's right, the business could be concluded off hand. She would stand no gammon, and it was useless to try it on—as the man never stepped in shoe-leather who could do her, Henrietta, brown. She was in years a little over the mark, but that didn't signify. If I wanted a bustling woman, who could turn her hand to anything, and a snug sitting-down into the

bargain, she was ready to come to "the pint," and no mistake. Since Bob Short had mizzled with thirteen bob and a tanner, she could trust nobody, no how. Betsy, she thought, was honest—but she kept company of late with a Landseer—and troopers, she heard her poor mother often say, were never no good to girls. When she closed the shop, she would meet me any night in the back-parlour of the Fortune of War. There preliminaries could be settled; and if I was a gent, she expected I would not attempt to come it Hookey Walker—but draw it mild, and state what rowdy I could stump up.

There were passages in Miss Timmins' letter which, from the peculiarity of the language, were rather puzzling; but the whole was tolerably comprehensible. It was a very promising prospect, no doubt; but, averse to business from my youth, I declined taking legal possession of the fair Henrietta and No. 114, Leg Alley — and consequently the back-parlour of the Fortune of War was left unvisited.

It took me a summer's day to wade through the exuberant temptations held out to encourage me to enter directly into the holy and honourable estate. In the numerous candidates, I could trace the lady's-maid and nursery governess as being predominant—and distinguish the outpourings of frosted virginity from the girlish folly of fifteen. The styles were also different as the paper employed to waft their hymenial hankerings—and, while some were pathetic, others were innocently painful. One *billet doux* was punctuated with such precision, that it might have been imagined the ghost of Lindley Murray was standing at the writer's elbow—another, untrammelled by rules of art, claimed a bold freedom, and set orthography at defiance. It was all permissible—for, if Lord Loggerhead—*authoritate*, Doctor Pangloss—in right of his peerage, was entitled to spell physician with an F, why should not a lady be allowed to throw a couple of D's into idolatry?

The ordeal was nearly ended—two-and-

twenty letters had passed review, and the last lay unclosed upon the table. I took it up respectfully — the air of the envelope was aristocratic, while Cupid bestrode a lion on the seal. The direction was the perfection of caligraphy — the letters seemed formed with a crowquill in the hand of Cupid — the wax was carefully cut round — and to violate the integrity of the seal would have been absolutely felonious. Gently, the dear enclosure was liberated, and as I read love's missive, at every third sentence I pressed the paper to my lips.

Thus ran the epistle :—

“ Timidly I take up my pen—while maiden modesty whispers that delicacy should restrain an impulse which some secret agency forces me to obey. Accident placed your advertisement in my hand—I read it to smile at the absurdity I had hitherto attached to such unusual means of making the misery of a desolate heart known generally to an unsympathising world. But, ere I had completed a hasty perusal, the smile died on my

pallid lip—the rose faded on my cheek—my pulse intermitted—and I sank fainting on the ottoman. Oh, God! the conviction flashed strongly as instantaneously across my mind, that in him who worded that dear paragraph the arbiter of my destiny existed—lord of a heart that never owned the throb of love before.”

Oh! was not this confession more than overpowering—so innocently, and so beautifully descriptive!—I was the master of her destiny, and lord of a heart that never felt a twinge of love before.

“Oh! what have I not madly hazarded—your contempt, and my own self-reproaches for ever. Yet spare the weakness of a woman—feel pity for her madness. She loves. A passion never known before has burst the stern barrier of prudence—and on the compassion of him her fate depends—on whose smile hangs life, but whose frown would be annihilation.”

I laid the letter down—was I dreaming, or wrapped only in a waking reverie? Not

at all?—the letter was written on substantial satin paper, and the life or death of a most interesting female was actually placed at my disposal.

“With humbled feelings I have confessed my weakness—but with woman’s dignity let me turn to a proud remembrance which again recalls the colour to my pallid cheeks. The child of nature—I have heard that vice exists on earth, and know it but by name. The words of love have never reached my ear—no lips save those of kindred have e’er been pressed to mine; and, like the crystal which never has been breathed upon, my mental purity is stainless.”

Saints and angels! here was a jewel above price. No, “’Pon my life, you’re an adorable creature!” buzzed into her ear ten times a night by mincing puppies in a country ballroom—and crystal purity, and lips unbreathed on. “By the simplicity of Venus’ doves,” the long-sought she was found!

The remainder of the letter was precisely what might have been expected. Further

communications must be delicately conducted, and, for the present, a strict incognita was insisted on. Adelaide Mowbray—the charming name was entrusted to me in strict confidence—would solicit an immediate answer—and on that answer further proceedings on her part must be dependent.

As I laid the dear epistle down, my eye carelessly lighted on the overture of Henrietta Timmins, and I could not but institute a comparison. “After I shut the shop,” quoth Henrietta, “I’ll meet you in the back parlour of the Fortune of War.” Heavens! were the very locality of Leg Alley named to Adelaide Mowbray, the shock might prove fatal. She cross the threshold of a vulgar *cabaret*!—why, she would as soon dance the Polka, or kiss in the ring at Greenwich fair. I instantly replied to Adelaide’s epistle—committed the remainder to the flames—and went to sleep, murmuring blessings on the dear incognita.

END OF VOL. II.

CAPTAIN O'SULLIVAN;

OR,

ADVENTURES,

CIVIL, MILITARY, AND MATRIMONIAL,

OF A

GENTLEMAN ON HALF PAY.

BY

W. H. MAXWELL, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "STORIES OF WATERLOO," ETC.

And, oh! I feel there is but *one*—
One Mary in the world for me!
MOORE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1846.

**FREDERICK SHOBERL, JUNIOR,
PRINTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT,
51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET, LONDON.**

CAPTAIN O'SULLIVAN.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I AM INTRODUCED A SECOND TIME TO AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—SOME PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF MRS. MAY-BERRY.

Quickly. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

Falstaff. Two thousand, fair woman.

Quickly. There's one Mistress Ford—

Falstaff. Well—Mistress Ford—what of her?

Quickly. Marry, this is the short and long of it: you have brought her into such a canaries as is wonderful.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Great was my astonishment next morning when I saw a hackney-coach stop at Limer's, and then and there deposit the person and effects of mine honoured uncle, the General. What the devil, at this time of the

year, had brought the old gentleman to town, when, compared with London in July, I often heard him declare that the Pontine marshes were salubrious? No common business had induced him to leave his abiding-place, and I impatiently waited for a disclosure after dinner—for the all-important concerns of the ex-commander were ever communicated or discussed with a bottle of port at his elbow.

“I have latterly,” said the General, “been receiving orders of readiness for my last march, and the route may come unexpectedly. There is one thing that gives me uneasiness, and it would be a great relief if it were removed. That d—d scoundrel, the lawyer, is, as you know, next in succession, and, failing you and your male issue, in strict entail the estates must descend to him. Did I but contemplate such an event, there is not a twig growing on the property I would leave standing. Your marriage is the only object I have on earth—and if you would make an old man’s parting hours comfortable, you

take a wife, and extinguish every chance of a villanous succession, to what has been, since the days of the Conqueror, an honoured name."

"But what could have tempted you to come up to town in the dog-days, my dear uncle?" I inquired.

"Why, and in a word, to get you married, Frank," returned the General. "Come, don't despair. I know you made sad bungling in your last attempts. Yours were false movements all through. One flank turned by the cook, the other by a school girl, with a French poodle, and the lady you selected for the altar turned out to be better suited for the straw! Ha! ha! Frank, you'll not forget *three* Marys in a hurry."

"Egad!" I muttered to myself, "nor the *fourth* Mary, if you knew but all."

"Well, *courage!* — the old soldier has come to your assistance. Not talk with him, but action — and, let me whisper it in your ear, the campaign is opened, and I have three

ladies from whom you may select the future Mrs. O'Sullivan," said my uncle, with a chuckle. "You didn't expect this, Frank—eh?"

"Why faith, no, sir. Have they sent in their testimonials?" I inquired, coolly.

"Sent in their testimonials? Why, what the devil does the fellow drive at?" exclaimed the commander.

"I merely wished to see what they had to say for themselves," I replied; "and yet they could scarcely have seen the conditions. No widow need apply—nor any lady over five-and-twenty."

"Why, what's the matter with the man?" and the General eyed me suspiciously. "Have you been rambling this way long, or is it only a rash pull at the brandy bottle?"

"I have neither got drunk nor am *distract*—I have only advertised for a wife."

"Oh! mad, for a thousand!"

"And have had three-and-twenty applications for the honour of my hand—and a

wholesale supply of youth, beauty, and fortune offered for me to pick and choose from."

"I can scarcely believe you, Frank."

"Fact—'pon my life—and if you will but walk with me to the Fortune of War, in the back parlour, you shall be introduced to your niece elect. Of course you will become trustee to the Leg Alley settlement, and, while preliminaries are discussed, stand the heavy wet—and, as the lady will express it, 'stump up rowdy' to buy the licence afterwards."

"I cannot understand you, 'pon my soul!—your very language is incomprehensible," observed the old gentleman.

I had fortunately preserved Miss Timmins' proposal from the "fell swoop" which had annihilated the other specimens of female penmanship. I handed the document to the commander, and, as he read it, explained the meaning of the term "Hookey Walker," and some other peculiar phrases used by

Henrietta Timmins, very meaning and expressive, but seldom heard in West-end drawing-rooms.

“ Now I begin to comprehend the business,” said the General, with a smile, “ but I’ll be shot if you did not seriously alarm me, for I thought your upper story had got out of order. And so, on my next visit to town, instead of looking for you at Limmer’s, I had better drive to Leg Lane;” and the old gentleman laughed heartily at the strange fancy.]

“ When,” I replied, “ my honoured uncle shall receive a hearty welcome. We’ll give you up the room behind the shop, and Henry and I can sleep under the counter, while you remain in town.”

“ But, to be serious, Frank, and come to matrimony in reality”—

“ Just, my dear uncle, let it stand over until to-morrow, as I have made an appointment to meet a chosen emissary from the court of Cupid, to be despatched to Leicester Square at eight o’clock, by applicant No. 23.”

“ Well, be it so. I'll hear of another of the *Marys* in a day or two. You had better leave your watch behind.”

I took my hat and cane, left the old gentleman to finish his port, and read *The Standard*, and hastened to the appointed rendezvous.

I am at times inclined to be superstitious, and I fancied that the evening expedition did not commence under favourable auspices. In Prince's Street, I encountered a middle-aged female, in velvet bonnet and black mantilla, and nothing wanting to impersonate the widow of the bazaar but the sheet of music. Were it she, and was it suspected that X. Y. Z. was within arm's length, would she not pounce on her victim, like a hawk upon a pigeon? But, thank Heaven! she turned the corner—and I hurried to the place where I should meet the messenger of love.

At the side of the Square named in the *billet* of the fair incognita I perceived a woman walking by the side of the rails, and

I crossed over and slowly passed her. Neither spoke, but both turned—and the same evolution was performed again. On this occasion, however, the lady ventured to take the offensive, and opened the campaign at once.

“What spell,” she said, as we rubbed clothes; “the last three letters of the alphabet?”

“Adelaide Mowbray,” was the reply.

“Right! Follow me!”

She turned into one of the smaller streets leading from Leicester Square, led the way into a mean court, entered a public-house, and mounted the stairs; I followed close at her heels, and next moment found myself *tête-à-tête* with the envoy of my unknown mistress—she over whose virgin heart I reigned lord paramount.

“You are punctual, sir.”

“I am always so, madam, when a lady is in the case.”

There was a pause, and I had time allowed

to examine the exterior of the chosen minister of Cupid.

She was a stout, middle-aged woman, and still retained the remnant of some beauty. The expression of the countenance was that of bold good-humour—but the alliterative expression of royal fancy could not be strictly applied to her—forty and fat she was—but fair could not be added—for in her complexion the rose predominated over the lily. Her blooming cheeks indicated no partiality for “thin potations,” and she was evidently one of those jovial spirits with whom a man, as they say in Ireland, may venture to drink in the dark, and never fear dishonesty in filling. She was acquainted with the technical terms used in the humbler inns—for when I pressed her to take wine, she stated her preference for alcohol and cold water, by the brief order given to the waiter for “brandy without.” On begging to know with whose society I was honoured, the lady intimated that her name was Mayberry.

The evening was sultry, and Mrs. Mayberry was stout—and before nine o'clock the third order for “brandy without” had been issued and obeyed, I having fortunately preferred sherry. The lady now became more communicative—and I then learned for the first time that to her fortunate influence over Miss Adelaide Mowbray I was entirely indebted for the happiness I looked forward to. That timid girl recoiled from an expression of her passion, and, like another victim to female propriety, she would never have told her love, but gone to the grave a martyr. Everything I heard regarding this sensitive girl rendered her a still greater object of interest—by mankind she had been villanously treated—and between broken banks and rascally guardians she had been regularly ruined. Still her prospects were immense—not a soul stood between her and an uncle in Timbuctoo—and no one knew his wealth—while a second cousin in Kamschatka was reputed to be rich as a Jew. Mrs. Mayberry added *en passant*,

that Mrs. Mowbray had received no remittances from either country for some time—but these inconveniences no doubt arose through the irregularities of foreign posts.

After an hour's agreeable conversation, arrangements were made for the happy interview. Miss Adelaide very properly declined receiving gentlemen in her lodgings—but, under the matronly protection of Mrs. Mayberry, and in the fullest assurance of my most honourable intentions, she would meet me to-morrow evening at an hotel. Mrs. M. further intimated, that she might be able to induce the child of nature to stay supper—at least she would try her influence—and she could do no more. These grand preliminaries being satisfactorily concluded, the cabinet council broke up—a Covent Garden hotel having been named for the promised interview. When parting, Mrs. M. rejected any further refreshment—but, on reflection, as I hinted that the dew was falling, she graciously consented to take “a mouthful

neat to keep the cold out," and we parted with a sacred promise that, on the next evening, we should meet at the Hummums—and no mistake.

I rode to the hotel next day, bespoke a private room, and ordered supper. My uncle was engaged with his lawyer in arranging some matters respecting a small purchase he had made in Wales, and I left Limmer's for the place of rendezvous, and, as I fancied, in good time—but my watch had lost ten minutes—the cab in which I embarked broke down—and, on reaching the hotel, I learned that the ladies had been there for nearly half an hour. I desired the waiter to show the room, and, on hearing us approach the door, Mrs. Mayberry stopped me in the passage, and intimated that she wished to have a brief conference. I accordingly signalled the attendant to depart, and accompanied the stout gentlewoman to the lobby window. I fancied that Mrs. M. had been looking at somebody drinking—for in

her opening address love and heavy-wet were singularly associated.

“ My dear treble X.—bless me, I mean X. Y. Z.—I have had such trouble with poor Adelaide. I had all but to go down upon my knees before she would put her bonnet off. She’s looking from the window on the Garden. Steal gently through the room, and for Heaven’s sake—dear dear double X.—don’t alarm her, if you can avoid it.”

By a squeeze of the hand, I conveyed an honourable assurance to Mrs. Mayberry that her caution should be attended to, softly unclosed the drawing-room door, and saw the longed-for incognita looking out upon the market-place. She heard me approach distinctly, but still she gazed at the flower-stands before her. Virgin trepidation, no doubt, had sent the blood careering to her brow, and the flush upon her glowing cheeks would have shamed “ the red, red rose,” ay, or the peony itself. I stole across the carpet

—my step would not have broken the siesta of a mouse—gently I inserted my arm round her waist—caught her hand in mine, and pressed her to my bosom. Maiden trepidation, I supposed, had overcome her altogether—passively she rested in my arms, and no distinctive sentence passed her lips.

Mrs. Mayberry, who had witnessed my insidious advance from the doorway, thought it time to figure in, and, scuttling across the room, she exclaimed, “Come, my sweet, Adelaide, don’t ye be frightened, child—but turn those pretty eyes of yours upon a gent that all but adores you.”

The action was suited to the word—and one energetic sweep of the arms of the commissioner of Cupid placed us in full front. A scream, any thing but theatrical, burst from Miss Adelaide Mowbray—while I recoiled three paces back—for, in the child of nature, whose crystal purity had been unsullied by man’s breath, I recognized, at a

glance, the relict of Colonel Melville, C. B.—and the levanter from Mrs. Screwup's select establishment!

Mrs. Mayberry, well-accustomed as she was to the finest displays produced by stage effect, was, as she afterwards emphatically expressed it, "regularly flabbergashed;" and such was her astonishment, that she actually called "the child of nature" Mary Jones. For my part, after the first surprise, I was the only one who seemed satisfied with the sudden *dénouement* of the drama—and simply observed, "that an unexpected meeting with an old acquaintance was most agreeable."

With Miss Adelaide Mowbray the power of acting was over—for, sinking on her knees, while *real* tears rolled down her cheeks, in faltering accents she implored me "to forgive her."

"Mary," I said, "I have nothing to forgive. The lesson you taught me was worth the money paid, were it twice told. Come, let me wipe these tears away, and as

Captain O'Sullivan had once the impudence to kiss the relict of a superior officer, he'll take a similar liberty with Miss Adelaide Mowbray."

"Well—*do me brown!*" exclaimed Mrs. Mayberry, "if I can make head or tail of this. Mary, is this the *flat* you plucked so cleverly at Cheltenham?"

"Yes, madam," I replied, "I am the *muff* in question, and the identical *spoon* stands before you."

"Then my own letter confirmed the full extent of my worthlessness. Was it found, Captain O'Sullivan?" And with burning cheeks, the quondam enslaver of my heart turned her eyes aside.

"It fell unluckily into the hands of Mrs. Screwup—was read for the edification of the inmates of her select establishment—and the breakfast-table community resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, to take its merits into consideration. To the course, unanimously adopted, I gave a dissentient

voice—and were not that fortunately an O was prefixed to my patronymic, my fancy for pistol practice ascertained, and obscure hints held out respecting horsewhipping, you and I should have been regularly gazetted in the *Chronicle*, and our course of love made known from ‘Indus to the Pole.’ But, come, supper must be ready ; let us forget the past, and enjoy the present. What say you, Mrs. Mayberry?”

“ Why—I say that you’re one of the heartiest chaps I ever met with—a good un, and no mistake !”

I rang the bell—supper came up—my perfect good-humour restored the spirits of the Colonel’s relict to their customary buoyancy, while her stout confederate was soon in “glorious mood.” From another flask of Champagne out flew the cork, with the report of a pocket-pistol—“all went merry as a marriage bell”—and Mary and I laughed over the former “passages of our love,” and

Mrs. Mayberry intimated her friendly feelings by bidding "bad luck to me if she wash'd it," to which amiable sentiment she turned down a full bumper. "*Carpe diem*"—was the order of the evening,—and three jollier individuals could not have been discovered within the bills of mortality.

"Mrs. Mayberry," I said, "your philosophy is after my own heart—'laugh when you can'—and let old Care hang himself in his own garters, if he have any."

"Right, Captain," was the reply. "I have buffeted the world from a baby, and was never fairly beaten yet."

"Your experiences of life as it is must be extensive," I said.

"Well, I have seen a little in my time," returned the lady. "Don't you think that 'brandy without' would be a proper addition to cold Champagne?"

"Indubitably."

"Order it for three. Come, Mary, no

gammon; any you leave, I'll finish—and while we are discussing it, the Captain shall have a few rough sketches of real life.”

Up came the alcohol, and Mrs. Mayberry thus continued:

“My parents were professionals,—and I may almost say that I was born upon the stage, for my mother lay-in at the end of the barn, immediately behind the curtain. I received theatrical education, danced a hornpipe at six years old, and at twelve was encored nightly in ‘Nice Young Maidens.’ At fifteen, I entered into the marriage estate, having bestowed my hand and fortune on a gentleman, who was clown to the company.

“I cannot say that the reminiscences of my first marriage are agreeable. My husband was a vulgar brute, and when drunk — which was as often as he had means to make himself so — he was a savage. If wholesome correction would form a good wife, I should have been an excellent one, for I was seldom without a black eye. We dragged on four

years together — I fancy we could not have managed it much longer—when accident dissolved the union. Our benefit at Royston fair turned out a bumper — and when it was ascertained that we should pocket actually one pound seven, Joe got drunk for joy, and in the last act broke his neck in throwing a somerset.

“Three or four claimants started for my hand, for I was considered a useful woman—and I selected a gentleman whose *forte* was light comedy, and who was clever at sleight of hand. A year of connubial felicity passed over—the incidents of our life the ordinary ones—sometimes a gleam of prosperity followed closely by dead failure—one while, ordered to quit the town by the authorities, and at another assisted out of it by the charity of the humane. Again I was fated to be unfortunate, for a second time I was left a widow.”

“What?” I exclaimed, “did light comedy also kick the bucket?”

"Oh, no! poor fellow! he was transported for exhibiting a little sleight of hand, and forgetting to return the property."

I smiled, and requested the lady to proceed.

"The day after his conviction, Mr. Sidney Mortimer demanded a private interview, and solicited the honour of my hand. He was our first tragedian, and considered the star of the company. Such an offer, of course, was not to be overlooked, and I blushed consent. As we were playing in the county town where my husband number two was in gaol previous to his removal to a transport, the marriage, for delicate reasons, was strictly private; indeed, so much so, that even a clergyman was not allowed to be present at the ceremony.

"Whether this union might have proved fortunate, I cannot say, for it was the shortest of the whole. Mr. Mortimer, in the 'Stranger,' had been just reconciled to his wife, and a crowded house dissolved in tears,

when a young lady stepped from the wings, tore him from the embrace of Mrs. Haller, and claimed him as her own. From a tin box she triumphantly produced a certificate of her marriage—and poor dear Mr. Mortimer was next day committed to the house of correction as a rogue and vagabond for three months, and again I was left unmated.

“The dramatic talent I possessed had become gradually developed; and Mr. Nutkins, the manager, who had recently lost his lady by a gin-fever, formally proposed for me, and was accepted. On this occasion nothing which could give *éclat* to the wedding was omitted. The gentleman who played *Father Philip*, in the ‘Castle Spectre,’ performed the solemn rites. The father of *Hamlet*—or, more correctly speaking, his ghost, gave me away, and *Ophelia* and *Lydia Languish* assisted on the happy occasion as bridesmaids. This cast in the ceremonial might appear objectionable, both being ‘as ladies wish to be who love their lords’—but, I believe, cir-

cumstanced as the company was, there would have been some difficulty in finding any ladies who could have taken the part.

“I had now become rather too stout for dancing, and therefore confined myself to genteel comedy, and the higher walks of melodramatic acting. Nutkins and I got on tolerably well, and business was good — but one innate failing in my husband occasionally embittered our connubial happiness. Mr. Nutkins was a dwarf in stature, and jealous as a Turk — when, unfortunately, at Ipswich, an Irish gentleman joined the company, and took the national business with immense success ; for he had a rich brogue, a good voice, tolerable assurance, and figure for the life-guards. In the operatic casts, he and I were necessarily thrown together — and here his performance was not satisfactory to the manager, Mr. Nutkins frequently observing that Mr. O'Toole's *accolade* was the kiss direct, and not the kiss theatrical, as it should be. We played only on alternate

nights—Mr. Nutkins was an angler — and on idle evenings he amused himself in fishing. Mr. O'Toole, who had no fancy for the 'gentle art,' occasionally dropped in to chat with me—and somebody, who envied him rising to eminence in the envied profession, ill-naturedly remarked to Nutkins, that he, O'Toole, passed his evenings at the lodgings of the manager, while he, the manager, was otherwise engaged. 'Trifles light as air;' you know the rest, sir—Nutkins returned unexpectedly — found Mr. O'Toole — words ensued—Mr. N. desired Mr. O'T. to abdicate his premises *instantly*, to which an assault and battery was the answer — Mr. Nutkins being ejected from the window, and deposited on a load of straw which fortunately was passing. To avoid the penal consequences, Mr. O'Toole determined to levant—and I, the unhappy cause of the break-up of a whole company, consented to accompany him.

“ But, alas ! the inconstancy of the representative of the *O'Triggers* went nigh to

break my heart—Mr. O'Toole's attentions to the fair sex were unbounded, and, after setting the ladies of two theatrical communities by the ears, and doing bodily injury to divers husbands and parents, who remonstrated against his general civilities, he bolted one blessed evening with the manager's helpmate, leaving this ill-used gentleman *minus* a wife, and the 'West Indian' without an *O'Flagherty*. Poor Mr. Dibbs, who was obliged to read the part of the absent major, bore his visitation with Christian fortitude — and of conjugal society he was not long deprived, Mrs. D. being returned the third evening afterwards, with a polite note stating that Mr. O'Toole, finding himself placarded in the 'Hue and Cry,' as a deserter from the Enniskillen dragoons, had determined to join a gang of gipsies for the present, and therefore had no occasion for a wife. "

"Since that time, Captain, I have continued in happy independence—you have had a couple of escapes from the bonds of wed-

lock; and, if you would be advised by one whose matrimonial experience has been tolerably considerable—should Hymen's chain and the hangman's noose be put to you as alternatives—choose the latter, and your sufferings will be shorter."

So spoke Mrs. Mayberry—the clock struck two, and it was full time to terminate the symposium. The bill was paid—the ladies committed to a cab, and a trifling subsidy slipped into the hand of "the child of nature," as I closed the door. Gratefully the donation was acknowledged—and I returned to Limmer's, wondering in *affaires du cœur* if other men were equally unfortunate, and marvelling why all the Marys in the world seemed to be reserved for me.

CHAPTER XXV.

I UNDERTAKE TO MARRY IN THREE MONTHS—MEET, FORTUNATELY, WITH CAPTAIN CALLAGHAN—AN IRISH VISIT TO THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

Shallow. You had not four such swinge-bucklers in all the inns of court again.

* * * * *

Silence. Be merry, be merry, my wife's as all:
For women are shrews, both short and tall.

Second Part of King Henry IV.

“What!” exclaimed my worthy uncle, as he entered the breakfast-room next morning, “are you alone, Harry? Why, I expected to have found an affectionate niece ensconced behind the teapot. How sped your course of love last night? Smooth and successful, as usual, I suppose.”

“Egad, my dear uncle, you have hit the nail upon the head,” I answered, with a sigh.

"What — another Mary?" inquired Sir Cæsar.

"Why, a Mary, certainly — another, too, and not another."

"Rather paradoxical that—will you have the kindness to explain?" said the old commander.

"Willingly, sir, if you will be contented with general description — modesty prevents me from entering into minute details."

"As, I presume, to adopt the phraseology of your Leg Lane correspondent, you were 'done brown.'"

"Another palpable hit, *mon oncle!* I met a month ago, at Mrs. Screwup's select establishment, the respected relict of a Companion of the Bath, and, d—n me, if she did not reappear in the drawing-room of the Hummums last night, transmigrated into 'a maid in the pride of her purity!'"

"Well done, purity," exclaimed the General. "She indulged you with a *tête-à-tête*, I suppose."

“Oh no—she was too particular for that, and came accompanied by a lady, whose virtue and experience made her a suitable protector for one so sensitive, that at the first creak of my boot she turned her averted eyes out of the window upon a cart of cabbages. Ah, uncle, did you but want a housekeeper, what a treasure you could possess in Mrs. Mayberry! The circumstance of her having been four times a wife would be a sufficient guarantee for her discretion—and although rather stout to dance a hornpipe, when you had a touch of gout, she would soften down the twinge so charmingly by carolling ‘nice young maidens.’”

“Much obliged, Harry, but it would be a pity to part Mrs. Mayberry from Miss Hookem, so you had better take the pair. But, seriously, let us turn our minds to matrimony.”

“A subject to which mine has been exclusively directed, my dear Sir Cæsar, for the last three months,” I replied.

“Nonsense!—your crotchety *liaisons* may do very well to kill time, during a short leave between returns; but, in downright sober earnest, my wish is that you should marry without delay, and that half-a-dozen noisy brats, the first fruits of this happy union, should give me a full assurance that no solitary contingency could interrupt the old succession—and thus, every hope of that infernal lawyer be placed for ever *hors de combat*.”

The old man's colour heightened as he spoke—the remark was lightly worded, but the object of the heart was conveyed distinctly. I dare not trifle longer with Sir Cæsar—but, rising, took his hand in mine.

“My dear uncle, I understand your wishes, and they shall be obeyed to the letter. One request I make—my leave of absence is limited—let it elapse—I will return to the regiment—send in my papers to the horse-guards—shake my old companions by the hand,—and, if fate does not furnish a wife in

the interim, and a wife, too, such as my dear uncle would approve, I'll return to Wales, and woo and wed one of the fair ladies he has selected to become the future Mrs. O'Sullivan!"

"Come, that's right, Harry; you're a feather-headed fellow sometimes—but I guessed that when you heard the favourite fancy of an old man expressed, you would not allow light considerations to interfere. You have at once assented to my wishes; now let me make a fair return. No accession to fortune is required—the income of the old estate has supported the old hall during my time—ay, and for half a score of generations before it. The acres have not been diminished, and there is ten thousand pounds in the funds. I don't wish to cripple your choice—bring me a woman suited for the wife of one who looks to nothing beyond the enjoyment of a happy home, and hold the honest position of an English gentleman."

"Faith, my dear uncle, so much depends

on what those qualifications may amount to, that I must, I suppose, *à la militaire*, have my orders in writing—shall the lady be accomplished—play, sing, valse, galop—”

“And be pawed by every puppy whose heels are lighter than his head—catch-weight both.—Distinctly, no !”

“Shall I bring you home a *bas-bleue*?—a lady, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, who was tolerably acquainted with geometry, and can point out the position of the ‘contagious countries?’”

“None of your blue stockings for me, Harry.”

“You would not reject a cockney, would you?—a thirty thousand pounder—soap or sugar—blacking or bacon—no matter how the money came? Of course the lady should be entitled to add an *r* to Sophia, and *à discretion*, interchange *v*'s for *w*'s.”

“No, no—we are not exactly in the market to the highest and best bidder, Harry,” said the General.

"Ah! I see you want blood — something in descent direct from the Conqueror — one who has duly graduated at Almack's, and served an apprenticeship in the *Morning Post*."

Sir Cæsar nodded a deep dissent.

"Artificial education you appear to dislike—what think you of a child-of-nature-school concern? — A rattling Irish girl who dances jigs — plays billiards with a cue — and rides over a stiff country, as if her habit-skirt was stitched to the pig-skin."

"A toss up, in choosing one of the latter ladies, between Doctors' Commons and personal chastisement," observed the commander. "Almack's would afford you an introduction to Doctor Lushington, and the Irish Amazon avail herself of the first connubial misunderstanding to try the virtues of the whip."

"Well, my dear uncle, I cannot hit your fancy—one trial more, and I give it up. Shall I, in newspaper phraseology, select for a helpmate 'a young lady decidedly pious?'"

“If there be one nuisance greater than another,” returned the General, “it is a female swaddler—a lady who seizes every opportunity of tossing texts about, and spiritualises over a coffee-cup. No, no, Harry, none of your chosen vessels for me—no piety in pattens shall be eligible. In my opinion, the vulgar introduction of sacred allusions into the ordinary concerns of common life is near akin to blasphemy, and to two places solemn communings should be confined—the church and closet. I encountered, Harry, one of these female Pharisees at Cheltenham, and unfortunately she sat next me at the table. In the cant of these pretenders to piety, she was a regular in-and-out-of-season gentlewoman. ‘What a wretched dinner we had to-day, General—but, ah me! why should earthly matters occasion us thought?—still they might have brought the beef to table not altogether raw—and such an apology for a fricandeau! Poor Mrs. Jones! her establishment is going fast down—she

pays no attention to her kitchen, and, I lament to add, thinks nothing of things to come. Alas, poor woman! how blind she is.' On the second day, Harry, she had rendered me dyspeptic; and, had I remained the week, I should have had gout to a certainty. Bring me no psalm-singer; if I must undergo musical affliction, send me Mrs. Mayberry, and 'her nice young maidens.' "

"But, my dear General, what the devil description of woman shall I look out for? I have proposed saint and sinner, and neither will pass muster."

"Bring me, Harry, in plain English, a gentlewoman — and in that comprehensive phrase every quality necessary to render married life happy and respectable is combined. I give you three months, and you may range over every inch of land within the four seas of Britain. With that time, and such a scope for matrimonial operations, if you don't succeed, why, d—n me, I'll take a wife myself,

unless you faithfully promise to choose one of my selected nieces!"

"Faithfully that promise is given," I replied, as we shook hands to ratify the contract.

"Then I am off to Plas Gwyniade with a lightened heart," exclaimed the commander. "The old succession will be continued after all—and for once the devil has deserted a true disciple, and the lawyer is outflanked."

Early next morning mine honoured uncle took the road, and a more contented commander never returned to his home, after having successfully carried out what he, in military parlance, termed a "delicate operation." In truth, the old gentleman through life had felt a disinclination to the holy estate himself; and, fearing this aversion might be a family one, great was his satisfaction when he found that I was obedient to his wishes. On my part, I began to seriously consider what course I should pursue to provide, within the given time, Plas Gwyniade with

a mistress — and, when ruminating on the opening movements of my matrimonial campaign, who should I run against in Oxford Street but Peter Callaghan, *olim* of the 87th.

“Is it possible?” I exclaimed; “my old comrade, Peter, and in London too?”

“Possible!” returned Peter, “here I am safe enough;” and, grasping my hand with a compression slightly inferior to that of a blacksmith’s vice, he tenderly added, “and how is every inch of ye, Harry, jewel?”

On this point I answered Peter’s inquiry satisfactorily, and added, that if he had no particular business to prevent it, I should be happy to stroll down Regent Street in his company.

“Business,” exclaimed my ancient comrade, with a whistle—“I never had business but once in my life, and that was when I was courting the present Mistress Callaghan, before I persuaded her to run away—and, after all, the weight fell upon poor Charley Ormsby, for he wrote the love-letters, and

undertook to bother the ould governess into the bargain."

"Then, Peter, you're experienced in matrimonial operations, and the very man I want to consult upon hymenial business."

"Hymenial business! what's that?" inquired the captain. "Is it to get a wife, or get rid of one?"

"To get one, Peter. In one word, I am *point d'honneur* engaged to my uncle, to commit matrimony within three months."

"Three months!" exclaimed Mr. Callaghan, with his peculiar accompaniment, the whistle—a mode he generally resorted to when he was anxious to express astonishment or unbelief. "Arrah, man! what the devil would ye be doing a third of the time? If Mrs. Callaghan were in heaven, which, if it pleased the Lord to give her the route, I would not particularly object to, but endeavour to bear my affliction like a man—well, should the dear creature slip suddenly off the hooks, and I hadn't matrimony

enough already to do me for the remainder of my natural life, *monasindiaoul*! maybe I wouldn't replace her in three days."

"Ah! Peter, you have personal advantages and past experience with which to open the campaign—while I am in love affairs a mere neophyte—and d—n me!—I blush to admit it even to a friend, with women what is vulgarly called a spoon."

"A neophyte," returned Peter, "is a phrase I don't exactly understand—but a spoon is dacent English. But come, the day's warm, and, the truth is, I feel my coppers rather hot, as I supped with a couple of friends from the ould country last night, and gave Offaly some practice in punch-making before we parted. Let us step into Verrey's—have a glass of Sangaree—and I'll tell you how I managed to get hold of the present Mistress Callaghan."

"Agreed. But, Peter, I remark that you frequently allude to your lady by the term of 'the present.' Was there a predecessor to

the fair partner of your joys and sorrows? and do you wear the rosy bonds of Hymen for the second time?"

"That you'll understand when we get settled in the French fellow's here;" and leading the way, Captain Callaghan slipped into the restaurateur's, and ensconced himself at a small table in the corner, and I took a chair beside. Here he appeared to have established a kind of telegraphic communication. The Captain's French was not pure Parisienne—but his whistle, in my opinion, would have, even in Kamschatka, superseded the necessity of verbal communications.

"Garsong! Phew!" and at the same time Peter's thumb was silyly directed to me. The attendant smiled, shrugged his shoulders, vanished, and reappeared, depositing on the little marble slab two large glasses of sangaree, which composition, I wish the untravelled reader to understand, comprises sherry, sugar, lemon, and nutmeg, judiciously diluted with iced water; and, as Peter averred, "the

sovereignest thing on earth" for removing the cobwebs from a gentleman's throat, who had, the night before, been looking at his friends drinking.

It may be as well here to sketch slightly the outer man of Captain Callaghan. Imagine a stout, slashing life-guardsman, in plain clothes, his hat reclining on the left ear, in an angle of forty-five; his *manaire* a correct specimen of the devil-may-care school; his costume outrageously fashionable; and each garment, by a judicious difference in colour, contrasting happily with its companion. Furnish his right hand not with an amboyna cane, but with a real saplin, and then you have Peter Callaghan to a T.

The nether habiliment of the gallant Captain was remarkable, and involuntarily my attention was attracted to that portion of my loving countryman's body-politic. As he inverted the glass of sangaree, Peter remarked the direction my eyes took, and seemed flattered by the notice.

"It's not every day you meet the like of these," he observed, with a smile of gratified vanity.

"Upon my soul it's not," was my reply.

"If you would have a pair off the same piece, I can give you the fellow's card."

"Many thanks; but I am rather overstocked at present."

"Troth! and I'll tell you a quare story about the same trousers. I was sloping quietly down the Strand, when I saw them hanging in a tailor's window, and the price pinned to one of the legs. They took my fancy at once, and I tumbled into the shop, ordered a divil who was stuck within, and about the height of Leprehawn,¹ to take my measure, fancied another pattern, and desired him to make two pair, and send them home on Friday. The fellow took my address, promised to be punctual; and faith! he was as good as his word.

"Well, I had finished breakfast and stepped

¹ *Leprehawn* is an Irish fairy.

into the hall, when I sees an apology for a crature standing with a parcel under his arm.

“ ‘ Are you Captain Callaghan ?’ says he. .

“ ‘ I often go by that name,’ says I.

“ ‘ Here’s your trousers.’

“ ‘ Tell your master,’ says I, ‘ that he’s the most of a gentleman ;’ and I takes the parcel, and went up stairs to try them on ; and maybe they weren’t a beautiful fit !”

Here Peter extended legs that “ would make a chairman stare,” and examined his lower extremities with evident satisfaction.

“ Well,” he said, continuing his pleasant narrative, “ I kept this pair upon me as they are at present, and locked the other in my trunk—put what money I intended to spend in my right breeches pocket, and down I goes to commence my travels, wondering which side I would head to. When I reached the hall, there was the Leprehawn’s half-brother, I suppose, the fellow who brought the trousers, standing with a paper in his fist, which

he jerked out to me as I was passing him fair and easy.

“ ‘ What’s that?’ says I.

“ ‘ The bill,’ says he.

“ ‘ And what do ye give it to me for?’ says I.

“ ‘ To be paid,’ says he.

“ ‘ Phew!’ says I; ‘ and what’s to be done if I haven’t the money?’

“ ‘ Why, I’ll take back the trousers,’ says the wee fellow.

“ ‘ Arrah! then,’ says I. ‘ Isn’t that mighty quare of you?’

“ ‘ I’ll have ather the money or the trousers,’ says he.

“ ‘ *Monasindiaoul!*’ says I, ‘ if ye’ll have aither—and the divil sweep the liars. Here’s one pair upon my legs — and you’re not the man, I think, to take them off; the others are locked up in the trunk — and sure you’re not desperate enough to commit highway robbery?’

“ ‘ I’ll tell you what I’ll do,’ says he: ‘ I’ll

stay here in the hall till I get the money or the trousers.'

" ' Ah ! then,' says I, ' to that there's no objection. As you seem a little wake upon the pins, ye had better take a chair — and if ye spake civilly to the waiter, he'll lend you an ould newspaper, and you can bring your master home the last intelligence.'

" With that I walks quietly out, and left the divil sticking, like bad fortune, in the hall.

" Well, when I found myself in the street, I was puzzled where to go. I thought I would have some country air, and I headed to Hungerford Market. All London was on their legs — young and ould — big and little — all were on the move down the river.

" ' My darlin,' says I, to a smart little woman, with a foot like Cinderella's, and an eye you could light a cigar at, ' where the divil are they all going to?'

" ' To Greenwich,' says she.

" ' What for?' says I.

“ ‘ Why, some to ride donkeys on the heath, and others to play at kissing in the ring.’

“ ‘ Faith, and in that game there’s both air and exercise—and, if you plase, we’ll try our hands at it.’

“ Well, away we went — had a dance in a tent—a little kissing in the ring—and a rowl down the hill afterwards. The divil a pleasanter place ever I was at — the time flew — the day past—and when I found myself back in London it was nearly five o’clock. The omnibus brought me into Oxford Street, and thought I, I’ll just drop in and pay the tailor:

“ Well, perched upon a stool behind his counter, the wee fellow was sitting—and a more cankered-lookin’ crater you wouldn’t meet, if you walked from Dundalk to Gibraltar.

“ ‘ What’s the matter wid ye, man?’ says I. ‘ Maybe yer wife’s takin a rowl down the hill at Greenwich Fair? Arrah! come, ye

divil, I'll put ye in good humour. There's yer money—give me a racate.'

"Well, he gave it me.

" 'Arrah! what's wrong with ye?' says I. 'Why man, yer face is the colour of a kite's claw.'

" 'Pray, sir, may I inquire what time did my porter deliver your trousers?'

" 'Oh! faith, and I can tell ye that,' says I; 'for I happened to look at the clock in the hall. It was close upon ten.'

" 'The scoundrel! he never returned since,' says the Leprehawn.

" 'Phew!' says I, 'he thought ye didn't want him.'

" 'Want him!' roared the wee fellow: 'he knew that he had to take home a large order from my best customer by twelve—a man punctual to a second. What's the consequence? Mr. Stubbs called here at one o'clock — told me coolly he had ordered clothes from the opposition mart—and has cut the concern to eternity. The scoundrel

has gone, I suppose, to Greenwich fair — but I'll make him his own master when he returns !'

“ ‘ Arrah ! .Death a' nouns !—don't take away the crature's character. The divil at Greenwich fair he is at all — but snug and warm, sitting on a mahogany chair in the hall of the Tavistock, readin' an ould newspaper, and attendin' to yer business.' ”

“ ‘ What do you mane ?' says he.

“ ‘ Didn't ye,' says I, ‘ tell him ather to bring back the money or the trousers ?' ”

“ ‘ I did,' says he.

“ ‘ Then,' said I, in return, ‘ divil blister the one or the other you shall have—and ye see I kept my word. You know where to find him now, and as yer in a hurry, I think ye had better send a cab for him.' ”

“ Och ! if ye had seen the little fellow's face. Well, I toddled quietly to Verrey's, to eat my dinner, and left the tailor and his man to balance their accounts. Now, Harry, isn't that a mighty quare story about the trousers ?' ”

"Oh! precisely what I should expect from such a *quare* fellow as yourself, Peter. But when am I to hear your matrimonial adventures, and where are we to dine?"

"Oh! with me, in Baker Street. I would like a run down to Blackwall well enough—but divil a one of me dare dine out. I have been on the ran-tan for the last week with a parcel of youths from the ould country, who came over here for a fortnight to finish their education. Next Thursday is dividend day at the bank, and I must get Mrs. C. into good-humour in the mean time. Nothing passes but her own receipt. *Marourneeine! tiggumtu?*"

"Ah! I perfectly understand the delicate considerations which induce a dinner re-union with Mrs. Callaghan. May I inquire generally, if the personal appearance of his lady is in happy accordance with the acknowledged taste of her excellent husband?"

"Well, we'll not say much for that," replied the gallant captain. "Men can't always

plase their fancy in a wife as they do in a pair of trousers, and go rooting through the world in search of youth and beauty, as if they had got a contract to furnish a seraglio for the Pope. Mrs. C.'s a good crature when she doesn't blow me up about the women—and she has thirty thousand in the three percents.”

“Ah! Peter, I perceive your matrimonial feelings are proper and prudential. Money's a consideration.”

“It's every thing,” returned the Captain. “Did ye know -Dick Donovan, of Knockcroghery?”

I expressed sorrow at not having the honour of that gentleman's acquaintance.

“Then I'll tell you,” continued Peter, “a mighty sensible remark of his. When Dick ran away with a widow from the Bath boarding-house, where the divil did he head with the bride but to his father's! The sheriff, at the time, had as many executions against the ould fellow as would have papered the par-

lour; and as the wedding party arrived late in the evening, it was some time before they would be let in. Well, when the bride was brushing up a little after her journey, Dick and his father came to an understanding.

“ ‘By the Lord!’ says ould Donovan, ‘you’re a broth of a boy, Dick! and ye say the money’s right?’

“ ‘As a trivet,’ says Dick.

“ ‘She seems,’ says ould Donovan, ‘a decent, sober kind of woman. She’s past mark of mouth, I persave; but that’s no great matter, if the money’s ready.’

“ ‘She’s no chicken, I allow,’ replied Dick; ‘but then she’s the more prudent for that—and ten thousand *arra-gud-shish*¹ I suppose must make up for the loss of a tooth or two.’

“ ‘Give me your fist,’ says ould Donovan. ‘*Monasindiaoul!* but ye have put us all upon our pegs again, and before the week’s out we’ll be able to open the hall-door again. But, Dick, dear, as she hobbled from the

¹ Ready money.

post-shay, I saw that she was amiss in the off-leg. Is she regularly spavined, or has she only thrown out a curb?

“ ‘If God’s truth must be told,’ says Dick, ‘the crature’s dead lame.’

“ ‘Oh! murder!’ says ould Donovan—
‘and did ye get no engagement with her!’

“ ‘Engagement!’ returned Dick. ‘By my conscience, father dear, I was too happy to get a grip of her. The day that young Mistress Donovan bestowed her vargin hand upon me, I was not the proprietor of a *schul-togue*.’¹

“ Well, then, Dick, dear, if she does go short, why, in the Lord’s name, we must put up with it.’

“ ‘Go short!’ says Dick. ‘Arrah, father, from the way ye talk, one would suppose that men married wives to run races with them!’

“ Now,” added Captain Callaghan, “that was what I call a sensible observation.”

I agreed with the gallant Captain that the

¹ *Schultogue*—Anglice, a rap.

younger Mr. Donovan's opinions regarding matrimony were incontrovertible.

A masonic sign, accompanied by the usual whistle, had produced for Mister Callaghan a relay of *sangaree*. My "withers being unwrung," or, rather, my coppers not being overheated, I declined to follow the Captain's example; and when he had finished number two, Peter intimated that we must separate.

"I must be off, Harry, to make pace with the little woman in time. Between the play and the cider-cellar, and getting into a shindy in the Strand, and into the station-house afterwards — and fendin' and proving this morning — and compromising for a waiter's black eye, and buying off a cabman — and gettin' bail — and one business after the other — devil a one of me was at home last night, good nor bad. But be sure to come at six. Mind, six sharp — for Mrs. C. is rather particular — and by that time all will be right, and ye'll find us like a pair of turtles. If

mention should be made accidentally of my being out three nights—”

“*Three!*” I exclaimed. “Peter, Peter! do you ever think of your poor sowl?”

“Asy, asy,” returned the Captain. “Arrah! could I lave three soft lads like Jack Blake, Pat Boylan, and Frank Haggarty, to the mercy of a wicked world? They came, the creatures, just for a fortnight, to see life—but, by gogstay! they could only manage the nine days—for the money failed. Well, I have nothing on my conscience to reproach myself with. In that short space, the devil a three boys ever saw more of the town. Sorra crook or cranny, from Pimlico Palace to the back of Tower Hill, but they had a twist through—and during their visit there was no time to be lost, to be sure. They were only regularly in bed—that’s with their clothes off—a couple of nights; but, when we were rowling about, they now and then took a sleep in the omnibus. I hope Pat Boylan’s eye will be right before he gets home, for

a peeper in mourning, ye know, would look odd in a man returning from a party of pleasure. Faith! he got an ugly clip the second night we were meandering over town, at a free-and-asy in St. Giles's; but next morning I brought him to a place off the Haymarket, where he got his eye settled to perfection. I forget the man's name: he lives three doors from a barber; and search London over, there's not his equal for painting out a black eye. Isn't it well for a man to know where he can head to safely, if he meets with a misfortune, and come away with the natural colour on his face, done so beautiful, that the devil a Christian would suspect that he had ever been in trouble? But, as I was saying before, if Mistress C. should make any remark about my being out a night or two, put it off as well as you can, and say it's the custom of the country. Don't be later than six, and mind the number. You can't mistake the house—it's within a stone's throw of Madame Tussaud's, where ye'll see a dozen murderers

in their real clothes for a shilling. Mind, it's sharp six."

So said Mister Callaghan. As we parted, I overheard an equivocal aspiration—it seemed to be a sigh—which, however, Peter contrived to convert into a whisper. I might wrong the courage of the Captain, but I shrewdly suspected that, with all the modest assurance of a bashful Irishman, Peter was in mortal terror, had pride allowed him to acknowledge it, of a conjugal *tête-à-tête* with Mistress C.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAPTAIN CALLAGHAN'S CONFESSIONS.

The time was once, when thou unurg'd wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear—
That never object pleasing to thine eye—
That never touch well welcome to thy hands,
Unless I spake, looked, touched.

Comedy of Errors.

Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her.

King Richard III.

Faithful to my promise, at a quarter of an hour before the Captain's dinner-time, I was duly at the place where twelve murderers in real clothes could be seen for a shilling; and who should round the corner, immediately in my front, but the identical Peter, a saplin in one hand, and on the opposite arm a lady.

I concluded at once that the fair one was the Captain's helpmate; and the slim proportions of "nature's masterpiece," contrasted to those of her liege lord, were as shadow is to substance. The parties seemed in earnest conversation, and, judging by pantomimic action, the lady played "accusing angel," and Peter was on the defensive. I followed half the street, and, slowly closing up in the rear, overheard two sentences distinctly.

"Ah! Callaghan, you Irishmen *are* so specious, that I feel half inclined to forgive you. But *three* nights, Peter! Ah! Peter, was not that cruel? I know what the end will be; you'll break my heart, and when I'm in my cold grave——"

"*Astore!*" rejoined Mr. Callaghan, breaking in on the unfinished observation in accents too pathetic for description; "and how long do you suppose I would be after ye?—you that's my only comfort in this wicked world."

I was now nearly alongside of the perfidious commander, and whispered in his ear—"I'll

leave it to your own oath, arn't ye at this moment the biggest villain unhanged?"

The delinquent started.

"Arrah! Harry, it's yourself, and here's the door of my present whereabouts, small and snug, and with the *ceade fealteagh*, you'll put up with it as well as you can. Mrs. Callaghan, my darlin', this is my particular friend, Captain O'Sullivan."

I bowed—the lady courtesied—and there was something in her manner which intimated that the impression I made was not very favourable. She was reserved—Peter not exactly on a bed of roses—and I was consequently uncomfortable. Dinner was removed, wine made us more colloquial, and Mrs. Callaghan hinted broadly, that three nights running, out of bed, would not affect the constitution like Parr's pills—and to be regularly returned on the police-sheet, might, in the end, damage a gentleman's reputation. I remarked at once that the observations were addressed at me—and I, in Mrs. C.'s estima-

tion, was one of the pleasant party finishing their education under the tutelage of Peter. To suffer innocently was not to be endured—and the *mens conscii* that I had been regularly at roost for the last three nights induced me to disclaim the “soft impeachment.”

“My dear madam,” I said, addressing Peter’s “better half,” “I apprehend you are under a mistake—I am not one of the pleasant gentlemen who have been patronised by my friend the Captain. I am a humdrum sort of devil—undress when I go to bed—and my name, like Norval’s, is as unknown on the police-sheet as it is in the ‘Court Circular.’ I never had a black eye painted out in my life—have escaped prosecution for assault and battery—have neither shot any one nor been shot at—in fact, madam, I am a character that ‘a broth of a boy’ would not acknowledge at a bull-bait. In the fullest acceptation of the term, I am ‘a slow coach’—and, to sum up all, I am resolutely bent

on committing matrimony without delay. To this resolution, the decided felicity attendant on my friend Peter's draw in the hymenial lottery has given confirmation—and I only wish to benefit by his experience, and learn by what arts he proved so eminently successful as he has done."

"Ah, Captain O'Sullivan, well may ye say arts; but I'm leaving you to yourselves, and let Peter tell his own story. He knows that I had four suitors for my hand—and would any of them, had he been so fortunate as to obtain it, within one short week, spend three nights, God knows where, and two others in the station-house?"

The lady became teary—Peter muttered something about "leading a new life."—Mrs. Callaghan, on rising, bestowed on me an approving look, and on Peter one of incredulity—the door closed, and the Captain and I were left *tête-à-tête*.

"Peter, you unfortunate man! what have you to say for yourself?"

The Captain shook his head.

“How can you neglect that amiable gentlewoman as you do? One who for you rejected four suitors—gentlemen who, had it been required, would have given security to sleep at home—and during their natural lives would have never seen the inside of a station-house.”

“’Pon my sowl, I’ll turn a new leaf altogether, and make Mrs. C. as happy as the day is long. She’s a good creature, after all—no beauty, you see, but that can’t be helped; she’s mighty thin, too—there’s no getting her into condition.”

“But how the devil, Peter, did you persuade any decent woman to venture into matrimony with a scapegrace of your kind?”

“Well, it’s a quare story, and I’ll tell you the whole of it.”

Peter, having duly replenished his glass, and extracted the cork from a relay bottle, then and thus commenced a narrative of his matrimonial adventures.

“In 183— I had the grenadier company of the 87th, when the devil put it into the heads of a parcel of cotton-spinners to pull down mills, and half murder the proprietors. Our regiment was detached through the disturbed district to drive the fear of God into the hearts of these malefactors—my company detached to —— ; and on a beautiful summer evening, in the end of June, after a clean march of two-and-twenty miles, we reached the town, and halted at the Wheatsheaf in the market-place. The men were sent out on billet, and Charley Ormsby and myself—the other sub. had been in a trouble about a baker’s wife, and got leave of absence to take possession of his Irish estates, and there remain until the regiment changed quarters—well, Charley and I took up our abode at the Wheatsheaf, and wasn’t it mighty quare, the landlord had been one of our own people. He had come to the town with a beating order—was billeted at the inn—a claner made chap you never saw wear wings—and

Mistress Tubbs, having two months before buried a sort of porter she called husband, took a fancy to the light-bob, and in a couple of weeks the lady purchased her lodger's discharge first, and a licence afterwards—the brush was drawn over ‘Timothy Tubbs;’ and under the Wheatsheaf, in gilt letters, there appeared the name of ‘Martin Grady.’ There was an Irishman's luck for ye !

“When Martin found he had a brace of his ould companions in the house, the divil a thing it contained was good enough for the couple. In a week we found ourselves mighty snug and mighty stupid—the town was dull as ditch-water, for, the moment we marched in, half the women were locked up, and the remainder, who were left at liberty, might have passed through the world under the protection of their own looks, and feared nothing but a dark night and a drunken sailor. Every mill-owner in the neighbourhood could have quilted his daughters' petticoats with ten-pound notes, and never missed

them ; but then they were so suspicious that we had about as good a chance of slipping out of the bastile, as introducing a leg under a cotton-weaver's mahogany.

“ ‘ Arrah ! what's to be done ? ’ says I to Charley Ormsby, as we finished the second bottle one warm summer evening.

“ ‘ By my conscience, ’ returned Charley, ‘ I think that I'll be found dead in my bed some blessed morning—this place would kill a priest. ’

“ ‘ Let us ask Grady if there's ever anything stirring in the place ? ’

“ Charley rang the bell, another bottle was ordered, and the landlord was requested to bring it up. Martin obeyed the summons, and when he had settled himself in a chair, we explained the difficulties of our situation.

“ The landlord thought awhile.

“ ‘ Gentlemen, ’ says he, ‘ would ather of ye be inclined to marry ? ’

“ ‘ I would rather, for my part, keep clear of that, ’ returned Charley. ‘ The doctors

say the ould fellow can't weather the next winter—and when my uncle slips his girths, and I come into the estate, I would like to take a twist out of myself single before I sate down for life. But, Peter, you would not mind taking a sporting offer if it came in the way.'

"'You're right,' says I, 'for between ourselves, tailors and bootmakers will be the ruin of me in postage—and for the last six weeks the divil a seal I ventured to break, they all looked so suspicious. There's nine or ten lying on my table up-stairs—I wish, Charley dear, you would read them at your leisure, and break the contents to me as gently as you can.'

"'I don't know your price, captain,' said the landlord; 'but there's thirty thousand at the other side of the garden hedge.'

"'Oh, murder!' says I, 'is it fun you're making?'

"'Devil a joke,' says he. 'Mr. Newcomb, the banker, lives next door—he's rich as a Jew

and wary as a kite—and, faith! he has good reason for looking sharp. First, he has to watch his money; secondly, he has a daughter with an independent fortune; and, thirdly, he has got a wife of twenty-two, beautiful as the morning-star, and playful as a kitten. No wonder, then, that the ould divil's in a faver constantly.'

“‘Oh, murder, Martin,’ says I. ‘Thirty thousand in her own power! Phew! I’m ready to make her Mrs. Callaghan at sight.’

“‘Upon my sowl,’ returned the landlord, ‘I think the same thing might be done—but to play the cards safely, a couple of performers will be necessary.’

“‘Here we are,’ says I, and I pointed to my sub.

“‘Oh, agreed,’ says Charley Ormsby. ‘I’m ready to assist ye, Peter, to any point short of manslaughter, and stick to ye like a brick.’

“‘Gentlemen,’ replied the landlord, ‘I’ll explain myself in a brace of shakes. Mr. New-

comb married forty years ago, and his wife died a few years afterwards, leaving one daughter, and thirty thousand secured upon herself when she reached twenty-five, and the money was placed out of the old fellow's control. Now, five years ago, the unfortunate man was desperate enough to marry a girl of sixteen; and between endeavouring to prevent his daughter contracting matrimony, or his wife committing love, devil an hour's comfort the banker has had, good or bad, since his second visit to the hymenial altar. Both ladies hate each other cordially, but they detest him still more—both have threatened also to become mutinous—and an old catamaran, stiff as a ramrod, and on the wrong side of half a hundred, has been brought here to keep a bright look-out. Here's beauty on this side—there's fortune on the other—and the ould beldame, that has the double charge, scarcely knows which hand to turn. On every side the hedge is closely clipped, and there the banker's left flank is insecure—on the right,

a terrace walk runs along the street, and a wallflower may be thrown out, and a billet pitched back again in return. Ye see, gentlemen, I understand the terms. Ah! poor dear Major O'Donohoe! Three years I lived with him as valet after I joined the Royal Irish, and he was an out-and-outer in love affairs—one night keeping an appointment in a churchyard, and the next quadrilling at the county ball. Ah! *willistruue!* the purse wouldn't stand it, though in spirit the divil couldn't bate us to a stand-still. Every assizes we had 'a loss of service' to account for—but at York a 'crim. con.' finished us tee-totally. The poor dear major had to send his papers and be off to France; and when he went to the continent, I was sent recruiting. You know the rest, gentlemen: Mrs. Tubbs honoured me with a preference—the Wheat-sheaf got a master—and the king lost a gallant supporter.'

“ ‘I should like to have a peep at the ladies,’ observed Charley Ormsby.

“ ‘ Ah ! then, that’s easily managed,’ said the successor to Timothy Tubbs. ‘ But, gentlemen, it must be managed discreetly. If we show a full front too suddenly, Penelope Winterton might take alarm, and one whisper to old Newcomb would lock up the garden during the time you honour Hadleigh with your company. There is a summer-house close to the hedge ; there you can lie concealed—and, unseen yourselves, observe every movement of the enemy.’ ”

“ The host led the way — Charley and I were safely ensconced in the immediate vicinity of Mr. Newcomb’s premises—and before we had finished a cigar, the next garden-gate opened, and three ladies made their appearance. In Indian files they turned off the gravel-walk, and took a narrow grass path which ran within a foot of our ambuscade, as if they knew we were on the look-out, and had determined to pass review. The banker’s lady led the advance — and the devil a more

beautiful sample of flesh and blood did ever an Irish sinner throw his eyes upon.

“Och!” says Charley Ormsby, with a sigh, as she passed, ‘Peter, I am a dead man, and it’s all over with me.’

“Next came the heiress.

“‘Charley,’ says I, in a whisper, ‘what do you think of her?’

“‘She’s rather thin to please me,’ says he.

“‘She’s all right, I see, upon the pins—and hasn’t she beautiful auburn hair?’

“‘In my part of Ireland,’ returned Charley, ‘they call that red.’

“‘Oh, divil may care,’ says I. ‘Fat or lean, red or auburn, she’s a dead bargain at half the money.’

“‘But, blessed Bridget!’ whispered Charley, as Penelope Winterton brought up the rear. “Since the creation of cats, did you ever lay eyes on such a horse-godmother as that?”

“Of course I had been looking anxiously after the future Mistress C.; but when Charley

nudged my elbow, I turned a glance on the lady employed to herd her—and, upon my conscience, she was a wopper! Fancy to yourself a woman three inches over regulation height, with black moustache, and an immensity of condition—a woolpack mounted on a pair of pillars, and compressed in the centre, only to give additional expansion elsewhere, as a sailor would call it, ‘both aloft and below.’ In a Moorish market, where they say that beauty is bought by the stone, who could even fancy the figure that Miss Penelope would come up to? Well, after taking three or four rounds of the garden, a servant came to announce that lunch was ready, and Charley and I returned to the house to settle future operations over a glass of sangaree.

“After dinner, we were debating the best manner to open the campaign, when a knock at the door was followed by the entrance of Corporal Hawley. He was one of the smartest lads in the company, and a steady soldier into

the bargain. I filled him a glass of wine, and asked him what he wanted. He hummed and hawed a while, and then asked my honour's permission to get married.

“ ‘Marry!’ exclaimed Charley Ormsby. ‘Is the divil busy with ye, man, to tempt ye to commit such an enormity?’

“I put in my oar, too, to dissuade him from the bare idea—and the poor fellow looked blank enough.

“ ‘Arrah! who the divil do ye want to strap yourself to here?’ says I. ‘Some idle dressmaker who wishes to range the world over on a baggage-waggon?’

“ ‘No, gentlemen,’ returned Hawley; ‘she’s a young woman of excellent character, and has saved a sufficient sum of money to buy my discharge, and set us up in business comfortably. She has lived for ten years maid to the banker’s daughter—and Miss Newcomb has promised to forward our settlement in the world, if we can but get your consent to marry.’

“Charley Ormsby looked at me, and I looked at him, and we both gave a whistle.

“ ‘All’s right, Peter,’ says he.

“ ‘As a trivet,’ said I, ‘and no mistake. Hawley,’ said I, ‘you have always been a good soldier—I put two V’s upon your arm, and I intended to add the third when I could find the opportunity.’

“ ‘Your honour has always been my friend, and nothing but to settle well in life would make me part from a regiment I am proud of, and gentlemen who make us happy.’

“ ‘And I suppose, Hawley, if it came in the road, you would go a little way to serve your ould captain?’

“ ‘To the world’s end!’ exclaimed the honest corporal, as the blood rushed to his cheeks.

“ ‘Ah, then, I’ll not trouble you to go half the distance—Gretna Green will be the extent of the journey. In a word, Hawley, you want to marry the maid, and I have exactly the same intentions respecting her

mistress. Will you give me a helping hand ?'

" ' Well, Captain,' returned the Corporal, ' I believe Julia has a fancy for me—and all I can say is, that devil a ring shall press the maid's finger, unless another appears upon her lady's.'

" ' Give me your honest fist,' says I, ' and by the blessing of God we'll make one business of it—and the Captain and Corporal shall be spliced at the same time.'

" According to arrangements with her lord elect, Miss Julia, late the same evening, was formally introduced by her lover, and assisted at the council of war. The intelligence she gave us was invaluable. Mrs. Newcomb was tired of a septagenarian husband, and Miss Newcomb of celibacy and a pretty step-mother: and whether the matron or the maid was a source of greater uneasiness to the banker, appeared to be a doubtful question. Miss Newcomb declared that her determination was taken to visit a watering-

place upon the coast; and never did an heiress, in her own right, select a more dangerous locality wherein to enjoy the salubrious breezes from 'the deep blue sea,'—every boarding-establishment being infested by retired captains, and 'gentlemen from Ireland'—'a worse lot,' where ladies were concerned, even than H. P.'s. The banker's rib also intimated an immediate intention of visiting 'dear papa and mamma.' Well, filial affection was commendable — but there was a cursed cousin on a visit, while his ship was refitting; and Mr. Newcomb very properly considered, that invidious comparisons might be drawn merely by reversing figures, between a lieutenant of twenty-seven and a banker of seventy-two. As to Miss Penelope Winterton, she could never comprehend how she had escaped male persecution so long. Of course, her conduct had been rigidly correct; but still, if a man threw himself upon her compassion, she would never rudely reject him, but, by a gentle refusal,

soften the pain she must inflict. Well, the upshot of the conclave was that Miss Newcomb was assailable—Mrs. N. might be induced to enter on an innocent flirtation *passer le temps*—and, while I attacked the heiress, Charley Ormsby would hold the matron in check. But what the devil was to be done with Penelope? Who was to ‘bell the cat’ and muzzle the she dragon? If a game of love were played, it was quite certain that Pen. would never consent to remain an outsitter. Here was the ‘fix regular’ in our operations—but fortune, while she threw Charley overboard, for once in her life, treated me like a raal gentleman.

“A London bank, with which the old fellow kept an account, was reported to be rather shaky—and as letters by the morning post determined Mr. Newcomb to repair for a few days to town, and ascertain the worst, he generously offered to take his fair bedfellow on this pleasant trip to the modern Babylon. The overture was made and ac-

cepted. But it was considered as a sop to Cerberus.

“ ‘ He fancies a run up by the railway will satisfy the child ! ’ observed Mrs. Newcomb, laughingly, to Julia. ‘ Ha, ha ! Mr. N., you’ll find yourself mistaken—and I’ll see cousin William before he sails from Plymouth, or, faith ! the house shall be made too hot to hold us all.’

“ Here was a glorious diversion in our favour ! Against either a young wife or an antiquated duenna, Charley Ormsby declared himself ready to take the field — but against the combined powers of both no man could have a chance. Deeply did my gallant comrade regret that in selecting a travelling companion, Mr. Newcomb’s choice had not fallen upon Miss Penelope. To that, however, many considerations were opposed. In the absence of the captain of the hold, it would have been injudicious also to have removed the lieutenant ; and, as it was necessary to travel twenty miles upon the king’s

highway to reach the nearest terminus, it would have been very questionable whether the narrow doorway of a post-chaise would have allowed Miss Penelope room to introduce her person into the interior of 'the leathern conveniency.' Charley Ormsby was a stout soldier, and an Irishman—and against the banker's wife he would have commenced operations without delay — but an onslaught upon Miss Winterton was an undertaking which required even a desperado to 'screw his courage to the sticking point.' To try 'a passage of arms' with the pretty matron would, like a skirmish of cavalry, have been light, pleasant, and exciting — but to assail a mountain of virginity like Penelope, which, for five-and-forty-years, had defied the amatory advances of 'villanous man' — that, indeed, was breaking ground before a first-rate fortress, whose extensive batteries, were they opened in anger, with a single salvo would annihilate the audacious assailant who ventured to insult the place.

“One circumstance was in our favour—between the fair inmates on the banker’s establishment mutual dislike and distrust reigned paramount. Now every body knows that no woman could let a week slip over without taking prussic acid, unless she had some one to confide every matter to, which common prudence whispered she should reserve strictly to herself. Did either of the three gentlewomen meditate aught against a canary bird, from each other the dark design would have been carefully concealed—and, if you want to kill a lady by inches, oblige her to keep her own secrets. Now, Mr. Newcomb’s womankind, to preserve life, were of course obliged to elect a confidante, and local circumstances not permitting an extensive selection, by happy accident on all delicate points, Julia was consulted, and hence the bosom of the *soubrette* formed a general dépôt for the private history of all concerned.

“On the morning of Mr. Newcomb’s de-

parture for the metropolis, a cabinet council was convened—Julia, whose opinions were considered oracular, advised active operations—as it was desirable that if the place should not be carried, at least the siege should be well advanced before the governor returned and reassumed the command. A summons, in shape of a love-letter, should be prepared—and she, Julia, would undertake that the same should be deposited where each lady would find the billet before she sought the arms of Morpheus. She retired—the Corporal went down to the tap to wait until the amatory missives were prepared — and pens, paper, and another bottle of port, being duly paraded, Charley Ormsby sat down to intimate to the enslavers of our hearts the deplorable state to which we were reduced.

“ ‘Are ye a good hand at a love-letter?’ said I to Charley, as I filled his glass, and he nibbed the pen.

“ ‘Faith! and I think I ought to be, or I would be a stupid divil—I that have read

five hundred romances and as many plays! Give me ten minutes,' says he, 'Peter; and, if I didn't produce ye an appale to the feelings that would split a paving-stone, never trust me again.'

"He was as good as his word; and in less than no time paraded a billet-doux, and, upon my conscience, if a woman were as hard-hearted as a hyena, she couldn't have read it without emotion."

The contents of Charley Ormsby's letter, and the effect it produced upon the ladies to whom it was addressed, cannot be disclosed to the gentle reader until the next chapter of this "right pleasant" history.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CAPTAIN CALLAGHAN'S CONFESSIONS.

Hostess. Which means she to deceive? father or mother?

Fenton. Both, my good host, to go along with me—
* * * * *

Page. Well, what remedy? Fenton, Heaven give thee joy!

What cannot be eschewed, must be embraced.

Merry Wives of Windsor.

“ I never met a nater hand at making love,” said Peter, after he had cleared the cobwebs from his throat with a full bumper, “ than Charley Ormsby—Lord rest his sowl! He would wile a bird off a bush, and put his *comether*¹ on a woman if she was shy as an unbroken two-

¹ *Comether*, being translated, means the soft and pleasing manner by which Irish gentlemen insinuate themselves into the good graces of the fair sex.

year-old. Well, down we sate to consult the best way to open the ball; and, to sharpen our wits, we had a couple of fresh *golliougues*¹.

“ ‘Charley,’ says I, ‘you’ve been always better to me than a bad step-father; and I put my life and fortune in your hands.’

“ ‘Peter,’ says he, ‘you’re as certain of the banker’s daughter as if the ring was on her fist; but, monasindiaoul! a dog of any humanity would pity the sufferings I have to undergo!’

“ ‘Arrah! what sufferings?’ says I.

“ ‘What sufferings?’ returned Charley. ‘Why, I’ll have to go through more to make your fortune than would kill a coalheaver. If I don’t bother Penelope Winterton, you’re dished; and, to make strong love to a moving mountain, which you find doubtful whether to call a dragoon in petticoats or a salamander, is the devil.’

“ ‘She’s rather stout,’ said I.

¹ *Golliougue* signifies an exhilarating draught. *Mém.* the less water in it the better.

“ ‘Stout!’ roared Charley; ‘she’s eighteen stone, if she’s an ounce, with a beard like a Jew slop-seller.’

“ ‘If they could,’ says I, ‘take a trifle of hair off her chin, I think it would be an improvement.’

“ ‘Oh, murder!’ says Charley; ‘if the banker had left his wife, and carried this old rattletrap with him for company, couldn’t I, like a Christian man, and with a clear conscience, have assisted ye? I know that this job will disturb me when I’m dying—I’ll have to perjure my poor sowl, and swear enough to lift the roof off a dog-kennel. At fifteen, Peter, dear, you can dose a girl with plain *capilair*; but, when a woman turns fifty, nothing but *brandy without* will go down with her. But the Lord’s will be done!’ and Charley finished his tumbler. ‘And now let me see—Julia’s our friend—and we’ll commence business with a letter.’

“ I must tell you, that Charley Ormsby was an able hand at the pen. Poor fellow! he

had got into a scrape in his youth, and had been caught one fine night in a Quaker's garret. The creature innocently had only dropped through the skylight, to put a civil question to the maid ; and the ould thief, her master, wanted to make out that he intended to commit a burglary. Sorra thing he had for it, but to 'cut his lucky' and be off—and faith ! to kill a little time, he joined a set of strolling actors, and there he completed his education. He had plays at his fingers' end ; and, if a woman had a heart made of paving-stones, one tender epistle from Charley Ormsby would make it as soft as a China orange. We called for paper ; and in five minutes, Charley had finished his third tumbler, and written a letter that I'll read to ye."

While Peter was fumbling through his pocket-book for this epistolary treasure, I remarked how fortunate it was that he had preserved a copy of such an interesting document.

" Arrah ! is it me take the trouble—not I,

faith! I'm like my poor uncle Martin. There was a scrimmage at Ballinasloe, and he knocked Dick D'Arcy through the clock-case. Of course, that evening he received a message, and the friends met to settle time and place. Well, Dick's man was a paceable divil, and offered to accept an apology. My uncle's second could hardly believe it; for, who ever heard of anybody, whose skull was driven through a clock-case like a racket-ball, who would listen to rason, good or bad, until he had a slap or two at the offender? Well, back comes my uncle's friend—'Martin,' says he, 'ar'n't ye in luck?'—'Am I?' says my uncle.—'Ye'll say that, when I tell you more. After the provocation you gave D'Arcy, I expected that to-morrow morning one of ye would have been left quivering on a daisy. What do ye think? they have agreed to receive a written apology.'—'And who's to write it?' says Martin.—'You,' says the second.—'Ah! then ye may go back, if that's the case. By the Lord!

I would rather take a pistol any day in my fist than a pen.' But I'll answer your question. The truth is, that when I was making a copy of Charley's letter, I spelt 'Venus' with an a, and was going to write it over again for my own use, only leaving out the description, when Charley said it wouldn't suit the young one, and composed another for me in a shake. Listen, and you'll say its beautiful.

" ' Masterpiece of Nature—

" ' Ask me not whence I came, or by what agency I reached a place, where man would find his heaven—that hallowed pillow on which your downy cheek reposes.' "

" Why, damn it, Peter, you told me she was bearded like a pard !"

" I don't exactly know what a pard is," returned Peter ; " but she had hair enough for a big drummer. But let me go on.— ' Your cousin Cupid lent me his wings, and your sister Venus opened the window. Surely so fair a casket never enshrined a

cruel heart; nor eyes which fascinated the wretch, would regard the agony they had occasioned with indifference. Would you know who it is who supplicates your mercy, cast one bright and benignant glance over the garden hedge, and you will detect him at once by his disconsolate look and tweed trousers.’”

“Tweed trousers!” I exclaimed; “why the devil need your friend have particularized his nether habiliments in a love-letter?”

“My dear fellow,” returned Peter, “it was done to prevent mistakes. You see, time was short; and the sooner the ould girl was brought to book, why the better chance to succeed with the young one.”

“A most logical conclusion, Peter—proceed.”

“Where did I leave off—Oh! I see—at ‘tweed trousers.—If that look be to murder, the mandate shall be obeyed—and in that elysian bower whence—’”

“What elysian bower, Peter? I never heard of it before.”

“ Nonsense, man ! It was an ould sate under a crab-apple tree, where Charley and I used to blow a cloud in comfort. Well—‘ in that elysian bower, whence a houri’s form in human shape—’ ”

“ I beg pardon, Peter, and must interrupt you again. Pray what is a houri ? ”

“ Arrah ! how the divil should I know ? May be it’s what we call in Irish *leprahann*. But no, it can’t be that ather ; for I never heard of a fairy that weighed eighteen stone. Well, to go on — ‘ in human shape, took possession of a bosom before unconscious of the pangs of love, I’ll end an intolerable existence—and a sword, which bore terror to the enemies of England, shall find its sheath in a heart

‘ “ That beat with such ardour for you.”

“ ‘ THEODORE.’ ”

“ Well, Peter, I confess it to be both a modest and a moving appeal. How did Miss Penelope receive it ? ”

“ Oh, then faith! I can tell you that—for Charley copied her answer on the back of this paper.—Read it yourself.”

I took this amatory document from Captain Callaghan, and thus ran Miss Winterton's reply. I give it with a running commentary made by Peter.

“ Rash youth—you dare and you despond. You throw yourself upon my sympathy, and yet fancy that my heart is steeled against your prayers—closing on my thirtieth summer.”

“ Oh, the antiquated villain! Charley Ormsby gave a shilling to the parish clerk, and he returned her at fifty-three—whether it was off or rising, I forget.”

“ Man has never invaded the quiet of this bosom, nor ever breathed his vows upon these lips.”

“ Oh, there, upon my conscience, Pen, agrah! I believe you most sincerely.”

“ And, therefore, in replying to a passionate declaration like yours, I find a burning blush rising to my cheek.”

"Between, I suppose, what she called down, and I called whiskers. Well, I wonder where the blush had room to show itself."

"I cannot upbraid you, for in turn, I must expose my weakness, and make a confession. When your dearly-treasured and most mysteriously conveyed billet was accidentally found upon my pillow, prompted by an irresistible wish to see the writer, I stole unnoticed to the garden; I peeped trembling through the hedge; on a bench two persons were seated—need I add that the peculiarity of tartan inexpressibles was not required, to point you out as the object of my sympathy. I saw that your affected mirth was forced—you sipped some cooling fluid to allay the fever of your mind. . . ."

"Brandy, cold—and in approved proportions," observed Captain Callaghan.

"I should have endeavoured to alleviate your misery, but for the presence of one, whose ribald remarks respecting beauty in full bloom induce me to consider him both

a man of bad taste and a dangerous companion."

"That was me," said Peter.

"As I could not personally communicate with you, I have trusted Julia with this letter. Despair not, but presume not. Although I would be sorry to give you pain, I will never consent to a secret interview after the family have retired to bed; and as I walk in solitary musing in the garden at 10 o'clock, as the hedge is low, I trust you are too much the gentleman to jump over it."

"You need not go on," said Peter. "The rest of it is about being hurried into indiscretions, and an entreaty that Charley would take no advantage of the weakness of a female heart."

"Well, Peter, proceed, I am all attention."

"We had just ended Pen's letter, when bang went the market-house clock.

"'Oh murder!' says Charley, 'my hour's come, and I must go to execution.—There's no use in asking you to pray for me; for

divil a saint in the calendar would listen to a sinner like you, if you were at them for a month of Sundays; give me a drop of water with a sketch of spirits through it.'

"I made him a stiff tumbler; he swallowed it to give him heart; off we bundled into the garden, and who was at the other side of the hedge, but the ould catamaran, humming like a nightingale, 'As pensive I thought on my love.' I ducked under a gooseberry-bush, and Charley hopped over the fence like a harlequin. The ould one made a feeble offer at a scream; and as a malster's carter graps a sack of barley, by the Lord! Charley Ormsby laid violent hands upon Penelope Winterton.

"I forget the speech he made, but I know it was out of a play—while she called him her beloved Theodore, and requested him to spare her if he could. Away they went philandering down the walk—she sighing like an asthmatic horse, and he swearing like a trooper.

“ It had been arranged between us, that if Penelope became too tender, Charley was to cough twice, and I was to make a noise, under a false alarm, to cover his retreat. Well, they had taken two rounds of the garden, and as they passed me for the second time, I saw that Penelope was beaten to a stand-still. ‘ No, Theodore,’ she murmured, ‘ every feeling of mine shall be sacrificed to your wishes, and I agree to abridge the tedious probation which ordinary decorum might demand. I’m ready to fly with you, and interchange our mutual vows at the altar Hymen, to-morrow night.’

“ By Saint Patrick, Pen was decided upon housekeeping, and coming to the scratch at once. Charley took a fit of coughing—I made a noise—he swore some villain was listening behind the hedge, whom he would put to death *instantly*. Penelope implored him to avoid murder, if possible. I gave the pear-tree another shake—Charley liberated himself from her arms, and skipped across the fence—

while Miss Winterton reluctantly scuttled away, without being able to fix an hour for the elopement.

“‘Oh! Peter!’ says Charley, as he flung himself upon the sofa. ‘If you would save the little life that’s left, give me some brandy *neat*—Body and sowl I’ve perilled for you, Peter—That last embrace has all but dislocated a rib; and Holy Moses! the oaths I swore! If I was at the last kick, the divil a priest in Connaught would give me absolution. Troth! I’ll put in an apprenticeship in Purgatory for this night’s work. Peter, you are a tolerable judge of clean cursing; you have heard Colonel Crossbelt blow up the regiment, when, in forming square, we left out a company—now, on the nick of your sowl, as a christian man, did you ever hear a prettier swearing than when I vowed eternal fidelity to that catamaran next door?’”

“‘Upon my conscience,’ says I, ‘Charley jewel! I was proud of ye—and for a young beginner, she stands a kiss with tolerable for-

itude. How she did hug you when I gave the alarm !'

" ' Oh Peter !' exclaimed Charley, ' imagine yourself in the embrace of a giantess, or the arms of a bear. But blessed be Saint Patrick ! here comes supper.'

" Well, Harry, matters went on pretty well, and Miss Newcomb was gradually induced to parley. Charley wrote the letters, Julia delivered them—and both stuck to me like bricks. The suite was slower, however, than we expected ; and Penelope became almost unmanageable. She was always endeavouring to fix the succeeding night for the elopement, and commence housekeeping at once. We staved her off with one cock and bull story after another, until matters began to look square, for a letter arrived announcing that the banker and his lady would return home on the third evening.

" ' By the Lord !' says Charley, when Julia brought us the information. ' We must stir ourselves Peter, or we are ruined—Faith ! it

would break my heart to have our flank turned in the long run. Julia must smuggle you into the house—come to close quarters with the heiress—I'll keep that she elephant out of the way; and if I am hugged to death by the harridan, get me out of purgatory with as little delay as possible.'

"If the intelligence of papa's return had alarmed me, its effect on the lady of my love was to hurry her to a decision. A letter from her young mamma, enumerating all the sights she had seen, and the manifold presents the old gentleman had purchased for her, piqued the heiress, and determined her on rebellion. Before we separated, she promised to be mine—and the third evening was named for our elopement.

"Charley Ormsby had suffered severely in his sentimental ramble with Miss Winterton; but when I announced my success to be complete, he congratulated me on my good fortune, and undertook to keep Penelope in check. We arranged plans for my levanting with

Miss Newcomb—two things were necessary — leave of absence and some money. Well, I wrote to the Colonel and the Paymaster; and next post brought their answers, and here they are.”

Peter made a second reference to his pocket-book, and read the following epistles:—

“ O. H. M. S.

“ *Private and Confidential,*

“ Barracks, Stockton, 10 June, 184—.

“ Dear Peter,

“ As you are bent on going to the Devil, you have my full permission to choose your own route. I give you leave between returns; and will apply to the Horse Guards for two months additional. If you are not sick of matrimony in half the time, my name is not

“ Yours truly,

“ CHRISTOPHER CROSSBELT,

“ Lieutenant Colonel, Commanding 87th Regt.

“ Captain Callaghan,

&c. &c. &c.”

“ My dear Peter,

“ Accept my congratulations—you're a broth of a boy, after all, and a credit to the *Faugh a ballaghs*. Fifty will never do. Remember, you belong to the fancy regiment of the 'ould fighting third,' and the lady must be whisked away, as the breach of Rodrigo was carried—in sporting style.

“ I enclose a draft—three days' sight—Greenwood and Cox—for £100. If you run short before leave ends, tip me a line, and you shan't want another supply of coriander seed.

“ I have been looking at the Directory. There are two banks in the place. In cashing your draft, I think you ought to give your father-in-law the preference.

“ More power to your elbow, Peter.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ MAURICE O'DWYRE,

“ Paymaster, 87th.

“ PS.—Remember me to Charley Ormsby. Tell him that two interesting young ladies from Stockport made particular inquiries after

him, and, from the orderly-room, they were sent to me. I informed them that he had volunteered to a black regiment in Demarara, and sailed to join it on Sunday week, by the steamer, *via* Bombay."

"The three days passed—the banker and his helpmate returned duly. Hawley and Julia were to accompany us; and, at the same shop, the shackles of maid and mistress were to be riveted. The traps of both had, the night before, been quietly handed across the hedge, and packed snugly in the carriage. At ten o'clock, the ladies, under Charley's care, were to be in waiting outside the town, and I and Hawley were to pick them up, and then hurrah for Gretna!"

"But what, all this time, Peter, was Penelope about?"

"Ah! then, upon my sowl! the same Penelope was far from being idle. For a week she had been packing night and day, and a collection of fifty years was stowed into

two-and-twenty bags, trunks, and portmantaus. Julia, the devil, gave us a sketch of the baggage; and the only things I particularly recollect, were three patchwork quilts and a set of baby-linen. We were told that they were securely corded, and I know that they were carefully addressed—a card Julia brought us was marked,

“ ‘ 22—to be kept dry.

“ ‘ Mrs. Theodore Ormsby,

“ ‘ 87th Regt.’

“ Nothing could be more fortunate than that Charley was recalled to head-quarters to give evidence at a court-martial, and he left by the mail at eleven. We, as I said before, bolted at ten, and at twelve—‘the witching hour,’ as Charley called it—Penelope Winton, and her personal effects, were to be picked up at the side gate of the garden. Well, in due time, we went off with four capital horses—Charley screwed himself snugly into a corner of the coach—and Pen, with the assistance of the gardener, and half an hour’s work,

transported eighteen stone of substantial humanity and two-and-twenty packages to 'the trysted place,' and deposited her person upon a portmanteau.

"The clock beat twelve—and suspense was horrible, as chime after chime sounded afterwards from the steeple. Like Sister Anne in the play, Humphry Thompson looked round the corner, but saw nothing coming. At last he was despatched to the inn to hurry the dilatory gallant, while Pen mounted guard over her two-and-twenty depositories. Ten minutes passed—the messenger returned. He was pale as a ghost, and flung himself upon a hairy trunk beside Penelope's portmanteau.

" 'What's the matter, Humphry?' impatiently exclaimed Miss Winterton.

" 'Everything's the matter, ma'am; and, as my old master, Captain Brace, used to say, There's the devil to pay, and no pitch hot!'

" 'Don't drive me mad, Humphry. Has

any accident happened to poor, dear Theodore Ormsby?"

" ' Not that I know of, ma'am ; the mail's a steady coach, and there's not a safer hand upon the road than Job Thornton as drives it.'

" ' Are you drunk or mad, fellow?"

" ' Neither, ma'am ; but in most unkin-mon trouble, for I'm sure to lose my place, and I'm innocent of these elopements, as they called them, as the child unborn, except in helping you and your concerns through the garden.'

" ' What elopements?" screamed Penelope Winterton.

" ' May the Lord pardon them!' returned Humphry. ' The captain has run away with our young lady, and the Lieutenant has eloped with himself!'

" Penelope had not time to faint, for her property was on the king's highway ; but she had time to denounce man's villany, and threaten an action for breach of promise. In

the confusion attendant on Miss Newcomb's disappearance, preparations for pursuit, and a general *rookawon* in the establishment, Penelope effected a re-entry of the banker's premises. A night's consideration told her it was wiser to conceal her wrongs, replace her traps, and remove 'Mrs. Charles Ormsby' from all and every of her leathern conveniences."

I have taken liberties with Peter's narrative, and dispensed with the graphic but round-about manner in which he brought on the *dénouement* of his story. It will be enough to say that he arrived safely at Berwick-upon-Tweed, stopped at the King's Arms, was married at Limberton-bar, and next morning, when still reposing after the fatigue of a forced march, the happy pair were roused from their slumbers by the advent of Mr. Newcomb.

"Arrah! Harry dear," said Peter, "if you had heard the old fellow, as he came stamping down the passage. Mrs. Callaghan was going to faint, but, says I, '*Cush la machree!* ye

need not care a *tranaine* for him—he's regularly superseded, and I'm commander-in-chief.' A knock at the door—'Who's there?' says I.

“ ‘The father of Miss Newcomb,’ says he.

“ ‘There's nobody here of that name,’ says I; ‘and I beg you won't disturb Mrs. Callaghan, as she has had a long drive, and needs a little repose after it.’

“ ‘I'm her father, Mr. Newcomb,’ says he.

“ ‘Oh, blur and nouns!’ says I, ‘but that's pleasant. Why, we were going off in the evening to pay you our respects. But as ye're here, step down stairs like a dacent ould man, as ye are—parade breakfast—don't forget salmon-cutlets—and we'll be with you in a brace of shakes, and ask our father's blessing.’ ”

“ Peter, you'll be hanged, unless you reform your life and manners. Why, what a brazen dog! to run away with the old man's daughter, and despatch him, like a mess-waiter,

to order salmon-cutlets for his amiable son-in-law."

"Faith, Harry! whenever you're in a scrape, take things cooly, and that's the best way to get yourself out of trouble. It answered beautifully on this occasion—in half an hour, Mrs. Callaghan and myself slipped down stairs, fair and asy—the waiter threw the door open—the ould gentleman was standing as stiff as a drum-major, and ready to open his musketry. My wife flew forward—fell upon her knees, and entreated pardon and his blessing—and Feaks! I plops down upon my marrowbones beside her. 'As it will be the same trouble, sir,' says I, 'I'll thank ye to include me in your prayers.' Divil a one but the ould fellow was fairly bothered—there was no help for spilt milk, you know—he forgave us at once, kissed his daughter, and shook hands with me, and we all returned back in pace and harmony, and not in half the hurry we had started with. Julia, for her share in the transaction, was

lectured and forgiven — I bought Hawley's discharge, and both are in our service."

" But poor Penelope, Peter?"

" Oh, troth!" returned Peter. " Mistress Ormsby, that was to be, soon found herself in a heap of trouble. All the divilment that had happened was left tee-totally at her door, and she and her two-and-twenty bandboxes regularly got the route. She was a persevering divil; and what did she do, but send a memorial to Colonel Crossbelt, informing him that her peace of mind was ruined, and hoping that he would order his false lieutenant to come to the post, and make her an honest woman. Faith! the ould fellow answered her letter by return of post. Charley sent me a copy, and here it is—

“ ‘ O.H.M.S.

“ ‘ Madam,

“ ‘ In answer to your letter of the 10th, I beg, in reply, to say, that I cannot supply you with the husband you require; but, as you seem particularly anxious to join the

regiment I have the honour to command, I fancy that I have an appointment that may suit you. I buried a pioneer last week, and am looking out for a well-whiskered successor. From Lieutenant Ormsby's description, I am inclined to think you will pass muster at once; and when you arrive at head-quarters, you have only to report yourself to the adjutant.' "

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BURNED SHEELING.

Old Man. O, my good lord, I have been your tenant,
And your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Gloster. Away! get thee away.

King Lear.

“Well, Peter, after all, a runaway marriage is the thing.”

“If ever the divil should persuade ye to slip your leg into the langle, off with ye to the Border,” returned Captain Callaghan. “Lord! there’s such fun in whisking off a woman! Helter skelter—hurry scurry—cursing innkeepers, blasting toll-men. If a chaise comes from a cross-road, fancying it’s the father in pursuit—the lady fainting in the carriage—the maid groping for the smelling-bottle—you looking if the caps are on the

marking-irons, and consulting John, upon the box, as to whether it would be better to shoot the off-side leader, or slip a bullet through the postillion. Then, when ye reach the public-house where you're to be made happy, finding the artist blind drunk in bed. He's wakened at last—the barmaid holds him up—he hiccups a benediction—a lame fiddler offers his congratulations, and away you drive to the inn, to make yourselves snug and merry. Down you sit—if it be after dinner—you to a bottle of port, and the lady to write a penitential letter to her mother. Before you have bolted a pint of black-strap, or she has turned the second page, up rattles a post-chaise, and out comes an angry father. ‘I am come for my daughter,’ says he: after which remark you politely inquire, ‘Don’t you wish you may get her?’ Then comes a grand trio: he hectors, you bluster, and she swoons. Enter the landlord, chambermaid, and boots—the first, to keep the peace, the second, to wind up the bride,

and the third, to run for the constable. After thunder comes a calm. Papa begins to relent, and the lady begins to blubber. You make a speech; insinuate that he was once young himself, and fling yourself upon his humanity. Grand finale. Kiss, shake hands, order supper—out comes another cork—general peace proclaimed—and all again ‘right as a trivet.’ ”

“ I confess, my dear Peter, that the picture you have sketched of Border hymenials is racy and exciting. One thing is certain, and that is, that in the marriage lottery you have drawn a prize.”

“ Oh! upon my conscience, Harry, I have no reason to complain. I left the settlement of my wife’s fortune to the ould fellow—he took it as a compliment, and flung in five thousand more. He trates us dacently when we go to him; and, except when the wife catches me winking at the table-maid, or has a breeze with her mother-in-law, we get smooth enough on. One thing bothers us—

the ould chap wants an heir to his estates : and, faith ! it's long a coming. By the Lord ! I have been thinking of taking her for a month or two to the ould country, and there's no saying what change of air, with fish and praties, might do."

As I strolled towards the hotel, I pondered on Peter's luck, and came to a conclusion that the benignant influences of Hymen's star are exclusively shed upon Irishmen. Why should I not imitate Captain Callaghan ? But what was Crusoe without Friday ? and where was I to find a Charley Ormsby ? He was no longer an inhabitant of this fair, round earth ; and, from Peter's repeated ejaculations touching the repose of his soul, the chances were that, for perjuries committed upon Penelope Winterton, like Hamlet's father, he was snug and warm in limbo—

"Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night;
And, for the day, confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in his days of nature
Were burnt and purg'd away."

No, no ; a master spirit, like an aloe flower, was the production of an age : and another century might be required to produce another Charley Ormsby. Curtius might jump into a gravel-pit—Hercules skin a lion—and Van Amburgh dance the polka with a tigress—but would either of the three have trusted himself in the banker's garden with Penelope Winterton ?

I abandoned all ideas of bankers' daughters and Gretna Green—declined watering-places—and, as my leave was rapidly expiring, I set out for Ireland, to retire from the trade of arms, and have a farewell *symposium* with my old companions. The regiment had changed quarters. I did not regret it ; for my quondam friend and counsellor, Shawn Crughadore, had gone the way of all flesh.

I never met a being so original. His fancy was a singular one—to make the world believe he was cold, selfish, and indifferent, while, under the mask assumed, a heart surcharged with kindness was beating. The rapid insight with which he penetrated human

character was astonishing; and any peculiarity, marked or trifling as it might be, was instantly detected and turned to excellent account. I have met with reputed humourists; nine-tenths of what they uttered bore evidence of premeditation; but with honest Jack no effort was required; the difficulty was to repress the gushing of a fountain—boundless, inexhaustible. To tilt with him, was to interchange a pass or two, and receive a home stoccado in return; and yet the thrust was so exquisitely delivered, that the hurt-one laughed more than all the company besides. As a *raconteur* he was inimitable; eye, face, and mannerism, played the pantomime of his story, and his exquisite seasoning with idiomatic Irish, when colder Saxon was not sufficiently expressive, gave a point to the narration not easily imaginable. I have laughed at many an amusing companion, but I never heard a man who could tell a story but—Jack Bourke.

My friend and lieutenant was detached with the company at —, and I started

from head-quarters to pay both a farewell visit. Incautiously, I let the morning slip away, and it was two o'clock when I drove through the barrack-gate. The intended excursion was not very agreeable. I had twenty-four miles to accomplish; and every body knows that an Irish mile is measured by "a mad dog and a worsted string." The route was mountainous—the roads bad—the vehicle, a jaunting car—the horse, an anatomical preparation, covered with skin—the driver, a living scarecrow—and, to top the whole, the country proclaimed.

For three mortal hours we toiled on, and at the end of that time had barely traversed half the distance we had to go. An eternity of accidents interrupted the journey; one minute, a trace went, and the next, we broke a buckle; a quarter of an hour was consumed at a forge in tacking on a shoe; and, at the conclusion of the operation, the driver modestly remarked that a couple of the others "would be the better of a nail or two."

“Why, ye villain of the world!” I exclaimed, “do ye ever expect to reach Ballyraggett?”

Pat quietly turned round a face surcharged with arch expression, and replacing the *dudheine* he had been “drawing”¹ in the band of a *caubeen*, which no one but my friend George Cruikshank could pretend to draw —

“Arrah! what a plisant gintleman yer honor is! Rach Ballyraggett! Musha! by Gogstay! after I give the baste a little water at Corny Bryan’s, wid a skitch o’ male through it, the divil blister me af I’ll be able to hould him, good nor bad, whin I face him at the hill. Has yer honor such a thing as a coh-web in yer throat? If ye have—such sperits ye niver tasted as ye’ll get at Carrig-naspidiogue—that’s Corny’s—and its jist across the hill. Whoop! Go ’long, ye túlip! don’t be afeard; we’ll be at Corny’s in a pig’s whisper.”

¹ *Anglice*—smoking.

We reached the promised hostelry. The horse had "the sketch of male," and Pat and I each turned down a glass of *potheeine*. On discharging the reckoning, my friend with the bad hat gave me an interesting specimen of Hibernian probity.

"What's to pay, Judy? Bad luck to yer manners! don't ye hear his honour spaken to ye, ye ould cannister?"

After making a mental calculation with the assistance of her fingers, Judy laid her damages at "two an a hapeny."

"Two an a hapeny!" returned the driver in a tone which seemed an echo of the lady hostess. "The divil blister the bit of the gintleman will be taken in, becaase he's a foreigner—give her, yer honour, a couple of hogs. Bad luck to the *schultogue*, Judy, ye'll get more."

I could not but smile at the scoundrel's cool assurance in protecting me from imposition. He struck a halfpenny from an ac-

count, which a jury of cardrivers would have limited to sixpence, and left an innkeeper's profit behind.

After toiling up a hill which seemed interminable, during which the danger apprehended from the meal and water fortunately did not occur, as the horse never evinced the slightest intention of running away, we commenced a long circuitous descent which wound through a wild and savage moorland, here and there interspersed with bogs. Sometimes, miles intervened before the traveller met with a cabin—and a bleaker or more desolate line of country a wayfarer never traversed. On sweeping round a hill and emerging from a pass, we came suddenly on the intersection of four roads, and the gentleman with the bad hat reined in his “baste,” an exploit that did not require any remarkable exhibition of muscular strength to accomplish.

“What the devil do you stop for?” was my interrogatory.

“ Sorra thing,” returned the Irish Jehu; “ but to ask yer honour a bit of a question.”

“ And could you not do that without pulling up that spavined hack?”

“ Spavined hack!—arrah! how funny yer honour is. Didn't I give my good six poun tin for him—and feaks! if he has a spavin, the man didn't charge any thing additional for it, any how.”

“ But what do you wish to ask me, fellow?”

“ Jist, yer honour, which of the three roads you would have a fancy for?”

“ Get on, you scoundrel!—it will be dusk in half an hour. Off with you to Ballyraggett!”

“ Feaks! an I would do that same—af I only knew the way.”

“ Knew the way! you infernal ruffian! were you ignorant of the road, and yet had the audacity to drive me, a total stranger?”

“ Oh! troth—I'll explain that to yer honour's satisfaction. Amn't I as well acquainted wid Ballybunnion as I am wid Ban-

nagher, where I was bred and born—and fait ! Ballyraggett's so like Ballybunnion, that I mistook one for the other."

" And consequently, you infernal vagabond, I shall be benighted in these mountains, and robbed and murdered by your confederates. But, there's one comfort left,"—and I looked at the double gun and case of pistols beside me—" I shall be able to dose you and three of your gang, at all events."

" Arrah—Blessed Virgin ! Ye always stood my frind," ejaculated the proprietor of the spavined horse, without paying the slightest attention to my fears or threats.—" That *gershagh*¹ will put all right,"—and he pointed to a miserable-looking girl driving a cow before her, the perfect picture of starvation. "*Cal-lieén bawn !*"²—and Mr. Clancy—for so, as I afterwards learned, my conductor was denominated—addressed the said *callieen* in, to me, an unknown tongue.

" Oh ! *sha—sha !*"—was responded — and

¹ Girl.

² Pretty maid.

she pointed to the road that branched to the right.

"'Pon my sowl! the divil a wink's on me, after all," said he of the bad hat, turning a gracious look upon me. "Feaks! I half suspected that was the road myself," and he winked his left eye significantly.

"Half suspected! get on, you scoundrel. By the Lord! if you haven't me safe and sound at the barracks of Ballyraggett before the drum beats *tattoo*, I'll stop half the fare, and have you tried to-morrow as a ribbonman!"

Mr. Clancy made no reply, but he used his whip liberally, and, as Evan dhu Maccombich properly observes, that "a haggis, God bless her, can charge down a hill," there's nothing to prevent an Irish jaunting-car from performing a similar exploit. We went on sportingly for half a mile, when, at the bottom of the descent, some strap or cord of Mr. Clancy's harness snapped—for it was difficult to decide whether in his horse's appointments

hemp or leather prevailed—and we came, accordingly, to a stand-still.

The place where the accident occurred, as it turned out, had singular interest. There, a village had lately stood, and, judging from appearances, but a few days had elapsed since the hearths had been extinguished for ever. The timber which had formed the roofs had not as yet been carried away—and the sods and thatch which had covered it, lay in heaps beside the bare walls, as they had been rudely torn down. I saw a sidelong scowl directed at the ruins by the driver, and inquired had the hamlet been voluntarily abandoned, or purposely dilapidated. Clancy looked up—

“The bird, sir,” he answered, “won’t harry her own nest—nor a man tatter down the roof-tree that he was born under. May the black curse of God attend him that did it, and him that ordered it to be done, day and night, sleeping and waking!”

There was a ferocious solemnity in the tone

and manner in which the anathema was pronounced, which really made me shudder.

“What means this?”

“It manes,” replied the driver, “that this blessed evening, thirteen families are roaming through the wide world without a *traneeine*¹ above their heads, because a middle-man overbid them ten pound, and wants the land for a breeding farm.”

“Can it be possible?” I inquired with a shudder, “for ten paltry pounds, to turn thirteen families adrift?—no, no! Some other cause remains to be explained.”

“None,” was the reply, and with an emphasis that surprised me. “Well, there’s a God over all. We’ll hear of something yet.” He muttered a few words in Irish which I did understand, the harness was mended, and the journey was resumed.

Evening had fallen; we were yet five miles from the barrack, and I urged the driver to get on. Considering the appearance of the

¹ Anglice—A straw.

animal, the nature of the country, and the roughness of the roads, he certainly made an astonishing progress.

Another mile was passed—Clancy remained gloomy and unsociable, for the ruined village appeared to have had a singular effect in depressing a spirit so mercurial. Night was gradually closing, and distant objects were now shut out, when suddenly, a bright light gleamed from a hollow hardly a musket shot off—it grew into a blaze—it scintillated, rose, and fell. Was it some signal fire? The barony was disturbed, and every night, agrarian outrages were perpetrated.

“What light is that?” I inquired from the driver.

“Upon my conscience! it puzzles myself, yer honour, to give a guess. It's nather red enough for a still-fire or a lime-kiln, nor does it look like burning heather. And see, there's people about it too!—and monasindiaoul! I heard the cry of women. Whoop! get along!” and the whip was applied to the jaded horse,

while, favoured by falling ground, a few minutes brought us to the spot, and presented a painful scene.

The ruins of a sheeling, still wrapped in flames, was surrounded by a man, three women, and children beyond computation. It had been hastily erected against a rock on the roadside, and the slight inflammable roof made of bog-deal and dried bent was totally consumed, and the turfs, with which the walls were formed, were charred and burning. The wreck of cabin furniture was strewn about, the children making a wild outcry, the women seated, as they term it in Ireland, on their hunkers, swaying themselves to and fro, and uttering a low, monotonous lamentation. The man, with his brow knitted and his arms folded on his breast, was gazing on the glowing ruins with a steady and despairing scowl. To the driver's expression of sympathy the women responded; but the man preserved a gloomy silence, and kept his fixed stare turned on the smouldering remains of the

wretched hut, which had been his last night's shelter.

"In God's name, what means this?" I exclaimed.

Turning his eyes from the smoking ruins, and for the first time fixing a dark and angry glance on me, "It means," he said, "that on this day week, my father's cabin was torn down—and this evening, that the sheeling his son had built to shelter a blind old man, a mother, a wife, and family, is what ye see it now—rubbish and ashes!"

"By Heaven, poor fellow, I feel for you!"

"I thank you, sir—in one's trouble, a kindly word is pleasant. But gazing on these smoking ruins will not shelter the poor children and the old people. Come women, cease—your noisecrying won't roof another cabin. Up and assist me."

"Was it accident by which the hut was burned?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes! some flax, for want of room, was unluckily placed too near the fire, a spark

flew out, and caught it. In a moment the hovel was in a blaze, and we had scarce time to drag out the trifling things which you see scattered about, and were all that had escaped the middle-man's rapacity."

"Courage, friend ; you must rebuild your sheeling."

" 'Tis readily said, sir, but rather more troublesome to effect."

"Come—don't be cast down—I'll give you a hand, myself, to-morrow. How far are we from the barracks of Ballyraggett?"

"You are four long miles," was the reply.

"Then night is falling, and it will be dark before we reach our destination. Farewell—God pity and assist you."

As I spoke, I slipped five sovereigns into the peasant's hand, and turned away to mount my vehicle.

"Money and kindness from a sassenach !" the dark stranger exclaimed, in tones bespeaking surprise and incredulity, as, at the same moment, the smouldering embers

emitted a bright and transient flame. He glanced at my gift. "Gold, by the light of Heaven! Hold, sir; you have made a mistake."

"None, my friend. I gave you only what I can spare, and you require. Drive on, you scoundrel. If *tattoo's* sounded, you know the penalty."

"Arrah! the divil a scurrick yer honor will pay me the less for all that. Whoop, Bonypart. G'long wid ye, I say. Af there's oats in Ballyraggett, maybe ye won't have yer wicked will of half-a-peck!"

In less than an hour we entered that pleasant town—our advent being duly announced by the barking of curs, and women bolting to the cabin-doors to ascertain who the new arrival might be. As we drove to the barrack-gate, the bugle sounded the retreat—and its call was a signal for Mr. Clancy to make an outpouring of blessings to the Virgin, with a modest eulogy on himself.

"Arrah, Captain, jewel, wouldn't ye trust

yerself over the wide world with Pat Clancy after this, and let me rowl ye from Skibbereen to the rock of Giberaltar? Amn't I the boy that can make Bonypart step out, and isn't he the baste that can do it too? Isn't it a mortal pity that my mother hadn't more of me?"

"In that opinion I have no doubt the hangman would fully agree."

"Don't mintion him, the thief of the world! Feaks, Captain, Pat Clancy won't spoil a market if he can help it. Lord's blessens on yer honour—I knew ye would give me a trifle over an above to drink yer health. May fist and purse never fail you; and bad luck to ye, af I wish it."

With this valedictory supplication, he of the bad hat wheeled round the namesake of Napoleon, and away he went, carolling an Irish song, as I entered the barrack of Ballyragget.

To my worthy subaltern I detailed the evening's adventures, of which the destruction

of the peasant's hut formed the leading incident. Bob Howard was a kind-hearted Englishman, and into the misfortunes of the desolate mountaineers he entered with warmth and interest. We spoke of the melancholy position in which decrepid age and helpless infancy were placed, isolated among dreary mountains, the hearth extinguished, and the hut a ruin.

“By Jove, Harry, we'll build the poor family an abiding place, and house them before to-morrow's sunset. Order an early parade, and after breakfast, we'll take a strong fatigue party out, and, in double quick, up with another ‘mud edifice,’ as the song goes. Without the blessing of holy Church, this great work could not be expected to succeed, and I'll send over the way for the Priest, and take him into the number of councillors.”

Father Anthony M'Cabe at once responded to the invitation, and tendered his hearty assistance. Over a stoup of inimitable poteenie,

the operations of the morrow were arranged. His reverence contracted to supply a sufficiency of implements, and we undertook to find enough hands to use them. We ordered rations to be issued to the men—I added the whole contents of the butcher's shop, a dead wedder to the stock—and the priest made a votive offering to the pious undertaking, in the shape of a keg of whisky.

I have viewed many a Continental *fête*, and seen the civic and military authorities strangely combined in the pageant. I have witnessed the Lords of Session opening a highland assizes, played into Court by the pipers of a Celtic corps, but our expedition from Ballyraggett left both these immeasurably behind. The priest, without sending out the fiery cross, had quietly levied a nondescript collection of tag, rag, and bobtail. As Robinson Crusoe always is depicted as “doubly armed,” so each of his reverence's contingent bore on one shoulder a trusty loy,¹ and, as a

¹ *Loy*, a one-sided spade.

counter-balance, carried on the opposite an axe or shovel. That most indispensable appurtenance of war, the commissariate, was conveyed on a country cart; and, seated between the slain sheep and cask of potteen, were the chief musicians of the village, who, when our bugle ceased, like true Arcadians, in turn, on pipes and fiddle, "discoursed most excellent music."

When we reached the height that domineered the burning sheeling, we observed the family busily employed in clearing the ruins of the hut away, a task which our unexpected appearance suddenly interrupted. The Priest had trotted his pony on before the grand cavalcade, and we saw him conversing with the desolate family. That our intentions were charitable, the popping down of the women on their knees assured us was perfectly understood; and while the *levy en masse* of Ballyragget proceeded to commence operations at once, we halted on a hillock, piled arms, divided the party into

two reliefs, and while one remained in position to protect the munitions of war, the other stripped their stocks and jackets off, and proceeded to assist the pleasant people of Ballyraggett. All were volunteers on the occasion—and the soldiers and peasantry vied with each other in hurrying the work of humanity on. Next to Aladdin's lamp, four-score pairs of willing hands will soon construct an Irish cabin. Ere sunset, "a house, Musha, that the priest might live in," was completed; and when the bugle played the party from the scene of their labours, a family houseless at daylight from the cradle to the crutch, were covered by a roof; the hearth was lighted again; and that stern, dark man, the father, all desperate a few hours before, raised his eyes to Heaven, and implored blessings on the strangers who had succoured him.

If any proof of the mercurial character of the Irish were required, I had abundantly obtained it. Last evening, the most touching

picture of distress that the fancy can imagine was presented to me on the level turf before the smouldering sheeling. Now all upon that grassy spot was revelry and joy ; the pipes and fiddle were plied incessantly ; and, when one couple had "danced themselves out," another hopped into the gay arena. The priest's poteenie had been liberally shared by Trojan and Tyrian, soldier and peasant ; and when we commenced our homeward march, a thundering cheer and a shower of benedictions followed, until distance shut them from the ear.

That the feelings of the peasantry were not confined to idle and evanescent assurances of gratitude, was amply evidenced next morning. A short time before a peasant had presented himself at the barrack, and offered to enlist. He was a remarkably fine young man, and he was instantly accepted. Piqued at the coquetry of a village girl he was attached to, and believing that he had been supplanted by a rival, he stoutly determined

to abandon his false love, and adopt the trade of war. The rash step had scarcely been taken until the lady relented; and, unmindful of his vow "to uphold the king's person, crown, and dignity," he listened to the contrition of his mistress, and, as Anthony of old gave up a world for love, Martin Cannavan abandoned his sentry-box outside the gate, leaving his musket, *locum tenens*. He was traced, apprehended, and was being transmitted to head-quarters, under a corporal's guard, to await the pains and penalties of military offending, when his escort was surprised when resting in a sheebeeine house—the prisoner rescued—and, worse still, the arms and appointments of the party carried away.

Next morning, soon after the *reveillée* beat, a tap was heard at my door, and the serjeant of the guard entered. He came to announce that, within a few yards of the sentry-box, three stand of arms, in beautiful condition, had been laid, with the whole of

the appointments taken from the party that had been surprised and disarmed. On examination, not a cartridge had been removed from the pouches. The *opima spolia* were faithfully returned; and, tied to a trigger-guard, was a short but expressive writing: "Cursed be that man who would not replace the musket in the hand of him who wielded the spade to succour the wretched!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SECRET INTERVIEW—SHAWN A SAUGGART.

I have told thee often, and I retell thee again and again, I hate the Moor : my cause is hearted.

SHAKSPEARE.

An unexpected delay in the transmission of my papers, to obtain a retirement on half-pay, made me a sojourner in the pleasant town of Ballyraggett a fortnight longer than I had expected. The state of the country did not improve ; matters from bad got on to worse ; agrarian outrages increased ; a magistrate, when in the act of reading a fictitious memorial, was shot dead at his own hall-door, and in the presence of his family, by the fellow who presented it ; and, although a score of peasants were working in the lawn

not fifty paces from the scene of murder, not an effort was made by any of them to arrest the assassin.

While this reign of terror had reached its height, and the tenure of life and property was not worth a pin's fee, the long-desired missive came, and I was liberated from my duty at Ballyraggett. Bob Howard obtained the company I had vacated, and to the new Captain I handed over the garrison in form. By the same post, a despatch arrived from the office of the chief secretary for Ireland. It contained extracts from the secret revelations of a treacherous leader of the Ribbonmen, detailing their numbers and their plans, and enumerating the principal directors of the conspiracy. Imagine my surprise when, conspicuous in the list, the name of *Shawn a sauggart* met my eye; and, when it appeared that I had employed half my "charge of foot" in building a sod mansion for a brig and colonel, I

had, as fat Jack says, "abused the King's press damnably."

That the designs of the conspirators were far more extended than the shooting of a middle man, or the slitting the ears of a tithe proctor, might be inferred from one of the plans of action on which they had decided; and its conception was so bold, as to lead to a conclusion that the informer deceived the government, or had been deceived himself. It was nothing less than, by a *coup de main*, to surprise and disarm the garrison at Ballyraggett. Although Howard and I smiled at the absurdity of the attempt, we determined to make assurance doubly sure, and strengthen the fortress at the expense of light, by building up the lower windows with dry masonry, crenelated however, to allow musketry to be plied from within, in the event of an attack being made on the barrack. The place had been made a *depôt* for spare ammunition, for both the troops on detach-

ment in the district and the revenue police, engaged in the suppression of illicit distillation. There was also a quantity of fire-arms, either voluntarily sent in for safe custody by their owners, or which, from time to time, had been taken from the peasantry. The anxiety of the disaffected to obtain weapons and the munitions of war was unbounded ; and hence, the possession of the depôt, rather than feelings of animosity towards the soldiery, actuated the Ribbonmen in their intended attempt upon the barrack.

Howard felt somewhat uneasy in having a heavy responsibility thrown on his shoulders at this crisis ; and to his earnest request, that I should remain with him for a few days until things developed themselves more fully, I freely consented. In the mean time, every precaution was quietly taken, and we doubled the guard and increased the sentries. The tattoo was beaten an hour before the customary time—the gate closed—and admission refused to all without the garrison.

“ By Saint George, Harry !” exclaimed my successor, as we sate after dinner discussing the proscribed alcohol, which it had been part of our duty to suppress, but which, with a latitude of conscience that would puzzle a churchman to find apology for, we nevertheless most liberally indulged in, “ I marvel at this secret information transmitted from the castle ; and, the more I consider it, the more I doubt its truth. If these fellows are so anxious to obtain arms, why the devil would they return the three stands they had in their possession, after disarming the escort ? And yet it may be a *ruse*—a tub to catch a whale ; and, supposing us in perfect ignorance of aught designed, they may calculate that this *amende honorable* would throw us into a still falser state of security. Well, they won't find us napping, at all events—and, instead of a prize, they may catch a tartar. How now ? — anything wrong, Edwards ?” as the serjeant of the guard presented himself.

“ No, Captain. This note was passed

through the shot-hole in the wicket to the sentry, and it is directed to Captain O'Sullivan—"

I looked at the superscription—"To be delivered in all haste." The serjeant left the room, the seal was broken, and the handwriting of the note was evidently the same as that of the slip of paper attached to the muskets which had been left beside the gate. The contents were brief, and merely entreated that a stranger should be admitted, without being questioned or delayed at the gate. He had particular business with myself and Captain Howard—and at eleven o'clock he would tap at the wicket.

"What's to be done, Harry?"

"Admit him, by all means; he's but a man; or, were he the devil himself, in the shape of one, what mischief could he perpetrate?"

"Right; I suspect he'll prove an informer; and, from our own secret instructions, we shall easily ascertain whether his

disclosures are false or true. Serjeant Edwards!"

The non-commissioned officer re-entered. "A man will come to the wicket at eleven. Look out from the window on the street—and, if he be alone, don't challenge, but admit, and bring him here."

The hour passed—eleven came, and, of course, we had indulged in many a conjecture touching the person and business of the unknown visiter.

"He'll turn out a poteeine-dealer, for a hundred!" said Bob Howard.

"No, no; depend upon it, it is no whisky-selling errand that brings him here. No mystery would, in that case, be required; on that business, ten times a day men and women address you fearlessly in the street, and even in the presence of the guager. Hark! steps upon the stairs. An informer, for a thousand! say I."

As I spoke the door opened, and a man, muffled closely in a cota-more, was intro-

duced by the serjeant, who, on a waive from my hand, disappeared. His departure was a signal for the stranger to discard his incognito; and, advancing boldly to the table, the brigand Colonel, the owner of the burned sheeling, addressed us both by name, and bade us a good evening.

John Dwyer, or as, by a double *sobriquet*, he was sometimes termed *Shawn Dhu*, and at others *Shawn a Sauggart*, was a man rather past the middle age; of powerful strength, with, generally, a good-looking exterior. His features were regular, and his eyes uncommonly black and brilliant, but the *ensemble* was not favourable; for, either from the darkness of his complexion, or the heaviness of his brows, there were marked indications of a violent and excitable temper, easy to rouse, and difficult to allay. Dwyer's natural abilities were good; and his uncle, a priest, educated him for the same profession. But to the nephew, exhibitions of strength and activity at markets,

and flirtations with the fair were more german, than inhaling the midnight oil over a fusty folio. After a season he quitted Maynooth; and at two-and-twenty, instead of offering vows of celibacy at the shrine of Holy Church, he repaired to the altar of Hymen with the only daughter of a wealthy farmer.

With his wife, he received a large fortune for a peasant, stocked a farm with the money, and, for several years, was happy and prosperous. Suddenly, a cloud obscured the horizon of his fortunes: the peace of Paris gave a death-blow to Irish stock-farming; cattle depreciated beyond belief, the Western and Southern banks failed, and, in one fell swoop, the smaller farmers were annihilated.

Dwyer, of course, did not escape the common visitation; and in one short twelvemonth, the proprietor of a large and comfortable farm became the occupant of a cabin, and a few acres of tillage and pasture, held at a rack-rent, and from which nothing but sweat

and labour could glean the common necessities to support existence.

Wretched as that home was, even from it he had been savagely ejected, and with what befell the unhappy wanderer afterwards, the reader is in full possession.

I filled him a glass of whisky, and motioned that he should take a chair.

"It is a late visit, Dwyer," I said opening the conversation.

"And it would be a dangerous one for me, were any suspicion to go abroad," was the reply.

"Then something important brings you here?"

"I am come, not to betray others, but to warn my benefactor. If you will listen to what I will tell, without endeavouring to know from me what I will not tell, I can give you, gentlemen, information that deeply concerns you both."

"Go on, Dwyer," said Captain Howard.

"Hold, for a moment, Captain. What I

am about to communicate is done without any hope of fee, favour, or reward : therefore, however valueless the intelligence, at least you will admit its cheapness. What I shall not divulge, it would be idle to waste a word in seeking after, for I tell you plainly, that were I tortured first and hanged afterwards, one syllable that could compromise the safety of a living being should never pass these lips. Now will you receive the information I am inclined to give, and seek for nothing more ?”

“ Yes, we agree to the terms.”

“ And it is on both sides, honour bright ?”

“ Assuredly,” was the joint reply.

“ My name and visit never shall transpire ?”

“ Never. We pledge ourselves to that.”

“ Then attend to me. I need not tell you that the country is fearfully disturbed : you know the fact, but the extent you little dream of. Long-continued and severe oppression has broken the spirit of the people ;

they struggle no more to support increasing burthens, thrown on their overladen shoulders by middlemen and tithe proctors ; they know that any exertions of theirs to meet fresh and iniquitous demands would only produce renewed exactions : they see cattle and property melting gradually away — pounds crowded to an overflow with stock distrained for rent—and their poor cabins, article after article stripped, even to the potato-pot, and their children clamouring for food they cannot give them. Will they tamely lie down and perish on the way-side of starvation ? Will they look at the wan infant straining idly at the mother's milkless breast—and she, poor wretch ! bestowing tears upon her drooping offspring instead of nourishment ? No ; life now for them has but a solitary pleasure to look forward to—revenge—blood—murder !”

The deep intonation of the peasant's voice, as he ended his fearful sentence, was really terrific. No living actor could have pro-

nounced those ominous words with the awful effect of him surnamed "Black John." A look passed between Mowbray and myself, and the dark stranger thus continued—

"I am not come here, gentlemen, to pule about peasants' wrongs, but to apprise you of their determination to avenge them:" then, throwing a suspicious glance around the room, in a lowered tone he murmured—"Look to your barracks!"

I smiled:—the stranger coloured.

"You are incredulous, Captain; but desperate men will attempt desperate acts—and how often to attempt is to succeed? A finer set of fellows than you command could not be found. But were they giants, and not mortal men, what could they do, assailed by a furious and united population? Listen, and attend to me. There are more able men banded to each other in this county by solemn oaths, and by the stronger tie of mutual misery, than formed the army with which

Wellington won Waterloo. Within this barrack, even drum boys included, ninety-three men are quartered."

"By God!" exclaimed my successor, "the return is correct to a file!"

"It is a copy from your own return, Captain."

"Traitors—and even in our barrack! This looks serious, Bob. Might I ask, through what means this information reached you?"

"No; it is a question not answerable, and, indeed, not important. Pshaw! a handful of soldiers are easily counted on parade by a girl who seeks a buyer for her chickens."

"But why assail our barrack, friend? We are neither connected with these oppressors that the country people complain of, nor are we in the most remote degree approvers of these severities. Did the hearty pleasure with which our people joined yours, in rebuilding the burned cabin, show aught but a feeling of kindness and confidence?"

"Oh, no!" returned *Shawn a Sauggart*.

“No, Captain, the laying of these few sods gave a deadlier blow to Ribbonism, than a cart-load of corpses by rope and bullet could have effected. I was present at the last commission. In two days, I saw seventeen men hanged; and on another, witnessed thirty-six sent from the dock to eternal exile, and not allowed to give even a parting kiss and blessing to the wives and children who followed the cars, on which they were carried from the court-house. Ten thousand men witnessed the terrible scene. They returned home—intimidated think ye? Oh, no! burning to revenge their companions. But as to your people; let them traverse the country from sunset to sunrise, and none will give them a worse word than ‘God protect ye!’ One of your men was out late last night.”

“He was; and discovered by his drunken groanings almost insensible before the barrack gate. What of him?”

“He wandered to a distant village, was kindly received, hospitably treated, forgot

himself, and got helplessly intoxicated. Well, when it was sufficiently dark, the owner of the house brought him here upon a car, and he was carried as close to the barrack gate as fear of the sentry would allow them."

"These are indeed indubitable proofs of kindly feeling; but why, my dark friend, attack our barrack? That looks aught but friendly."

"Vengeance, Captain, must have means to enable it to find its mark. For one stand of arms smuggled into the county, three have been seized, and placed here. For one peasant who has the power of inflicting injury, one hundred are incapable from want of weapons. Here, what is most needed would be found—and possession was to be obtained by stratagem, and not by violence, if possible."

"Well, that secret design known, so end the hopes upon the barrack and the arms."

"Upon the barrack, certainly; but not upon the arms, Captain."

“Bah ! with arms in their hands, think ye, that ninety men would allow a mob, were it a mile long, to deprive them of their weapons ?”

“Why, no, Captain, were they apprised of the intention ; but men may be taken at advantage. Come, we will fancy a case.”

“Proceed, my friend.”

“Well, you go out upon the moor occasionally for ball practice against the cliff : you serve out eight or ten rounds a man for the purpose. As you fire at the target, the country people collect to look on, and pick up the battered lead, as it falls flattened from the rock upon the heather. The men expend their cartridges, and the last firelock is discharged : could not the crowd rush upon you unexpectedly, before you could screw a bayonet on ?”

There was sense and boldness in the plan ; and after Howard and I had interchanged a meaning look, I turned to the dark stranger, and told him the remarks he had made were useful, and should be attended to.

"We feel obliged, Dwyer, by your confidence; and, I suppose, according to compact, the quantum of information you think fit to volunteer is ended."

"Why, nearly so: possibly another hint might not be thrown away. You were anxious to obtain a few smart recruits, and within the month have enlisted half a dozen strapping fellows?"

"Yes, the finest young men by far, which the regiment has got for a twelvemonth."

"Send them away the first opportunity to head-quarters, and leave them there, if you take a friend's advice. Away, they will make you splendid soldiers; at home, they have friends among the hills. Enough, my say is said!"

"That last hint also is valuable. I am your debtor, Dwyer, and will ever remember your services."

"*I, not you, Captain, am the debtor,*" returned Shawn Dhu. "The evening you first met me, had the foul enemy of man presented

himself, in me he would have found a willing servant; and, God knows, had not my bad feelings received another impulse—the providential succour a stranger opportunely gave it—I know not to what extent of desperate courses my maddened brain would not have hurried me. In your appearance I read the working of an agency not to be understood, and bowed to the visitation of Providence. Under a temporary shelter, I slept in the bosom of my family; when, had you not diverted evil thoughts, it is hard to say in what wild act that night would not have been consumed. But, on the morning, when a bugle-sound called me from my work, and I saw your party winding down the hill; when the priest came on before, and announced your charitable errand; when I saw my cabin rising, through your assistance, from its ashes; when I saw my wife smile, my children watching the dinner you had brought us, and the blind old man turning his sightless eyes to Heaven, and invoking blessings on the

stranger who came to save ; and when you spoke, listening to every word you uttered, and blessing you again and again, I stole behind the rock unnoticed, knelt upon the sward, and swore that if to that cabin you were raising, you came with a king's ransom on your head, or a hand reeking with blood, spilled within the sanctuary of an altar—I swore that no power on earth should induce me to betray you ; and that for life, your friend should be my friend, and your enemy my enemy. But 'tis time I were gone—forewarned you are safe. Here, for miles around, you may wander safely, night or day ; not a hair of your head should be injured. But cross not the Callan. There is one there, to whom the very colour of the coat you wear would be excuse enough to issue a death warrant, were you unhappily in his power. When you see in a tall red man, a person addressed as Captain Starlight, then tremble ! But God grant, that the hour when your eyes encounter his shall never come !”

Concealed as he had passed the guard-room, Shawn Dhu recrossed it, and I opened the wicket for him myself. He wrung my hand at parting, again poured out a torrent of gratitude for my kindness, glided off under cover of a wall, and I returned to Bob Howard.

“What think you of our friend the Colonel?”

“Why, that he’s true as steel; and every syllable he uttered came directly from the heart.”

“Well, in *Shawn a sauggart*, I leave you a stout ally, and never did a fatigue party work to better military account than when they were turning up the turfs that built poor Dwyer’s hovel.”

It was now midnight—and after visiting the guard and sentries, we retired for the night.

The hours of my sojourn at Ballyraggett were numbered; for the morning’s post brought me letters, both from Sir Cæsar and his medical adviser, which determined me to start for England without delay. The General

had been seriously indisposed ; the term, on the expiration of which I had promised to return, had passed ; his kinsman of evil odour had given him fresh cause of displeasure ; and his matrimonial designs upon me had consequently received an additional impetus. The physician assured me that my presence would effect more towards the restoration of Sir Cæsar's health, than aught which the healing art could administer ; and I determined to promptly obey the old man's missive. An hour completed every arrangement : the men gave me three hearty cheers as I mounted my jaunting car at the gate, and I bade a last farewell to the gallant 87th.

CHAPTER XXX.

START FOR THE CAPITAL—A MOUNTAIN INN AND A PRETTY
HOSTESS—MORTEKINE CRASSAUGH.

As the stream late concealed
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes revealed
In the light of its billows;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flashed the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.

BYRON.

As my great object was to reach a town,
thirty miles distant upon the Dublin line,
where I should catch the royal mail, I directed the driver to take the nearest routes, and chose the mountain roads in preference to the lower one, as he averred that it would save six or seven miles in the day's journey.

In the highlands, the Sinclairs have an objection on certain days to cross the Orde—and, when passing a pretty river by an old, dilapidated bridge, and in answer to my inquiry, it was intimated that I had crossed the Callan ! I confess that I remembered Shawn Dhu's monitory injunction with alarm, and regretted, when too late, that I had not taken the longer and the safer route. But with me, indeed, the Rubicon was passed; and, by the all-powerful stimulus of money, I induced the driver to increase his speed, to enable me to clear the mountain district before evening should set in.

We had been, with two short halts to feed, five hours on the road; and now commenced a gradual descent into the lowlands. The drive was wild, but beautiful; and had the country been tranquil, I should have enjoyed its wild and romantic scenery. But I must acknowledge that, in my eyes, the transit of a disturbed district was fraught with too much peril to allow one to admire the scenic

beauties of the route ; and the sketch of Captain Starlight's character which Shawn Dhu had drawn was not calculated to leave a wayfarer at ease, when travelling through a district in which that ruffian reigned lord paramount. The old car-driver also entertained a desperate fear of encountering this truculent freebooter, and, in common with Irish peasants, he had a morbid fancy for the horrible. Not a deed of violence committed in this savage district for fifty years, but was faithfully treasured, and detailed as we passed each scene of half-forgotten violence.

After winding nearly round a mountain lough of singular beauty, with an islet and ruin in its centre, we entered a deep gorge in the hills, walled in on either side by cliffs, which seemed, from the perfect similarity of this rocky profile, to have been originally parted by an earthquake. Heath, high enough to hide a man, met the road ; and numerous shrubs, indigenous to the Irish mountains, after a heavy shower, which we from the

heights had seen falling in the valley, exuded an odour that no artificial gardening can produce. Round a pinnacle of rock, which, spire-like, overtopped the lower cliffs, a pair of eagles were circling about the nest in which their young ones were deposited; while a powerful and repeated echo answered the whoop of the driver. All gave the scene a wild, but interesting beauty, which its loneliness made perfect.

On issuing from the pass, my ancient Phaeton pointed to a large, stone-built cottage, on the road-side, and acquainted me that there we should find dinner, while we rested and fed the horse for the last time. The communication was most agreeable, for I felt confoundedly hungry; and a last stage announced, that we should soon bid farewell to the *terra incognita* we had been traversing for half the day. Before we came within sight of the caravansera, my conductor turned his eyes into the well of the car, where my double guns and pistols were deposited.

"Jist let me, yer honour, throw the *cota more* over them before we come to Morteeine Crassaugh's."

"Over what?" I asked.

"Why, the guns and pistils, sure, sir."

"And why wrap them up so carefully, when I shall bring them into the house?"

"Oh, for the sake of the blessed virgin, lave thim where they are, Captain! Divil a one of me will ever quit the car—and I'll feed myself and the baste beside it: arrah! don't let thim be seen, good or bad, af ye'll take my advice."

"Why, what the devil does the man mean? Who dare question my right to carry arms? No, no, I'll place these pistols in my pockets, and, until I clear these d—d mountains, this gun shall never part my hand."

"Then you won't comprehend me!" said the old man, with evident displeasure. "You might as well pin bank-notes to the tail of your coat in a country fair, and expect to find them when you had passed through it, as

show arms in this barony, and imagine ye'll bring them to the next town."

"I'll make the attempt, however; and if they are taken from me, it shall cost at least a life or two."

"No, no," said the driver, "not a trigger will be drawn. But what will be, must be. Remember, you had warning."

He whooped, flogged the horse, and in a few minutes placed us in front of the mountain hostelry. It was a large-sized cabin, built of dry limestone, and thatched with bent. On one side, an extensive turf-stack was neatly piled; and at the other, several half-ruinous sheds and hovels afforded shelter for the owner's cows, and stables for such wayfarers as visited this hotel, *en route*, through these highlands. The farm attached to the house comprised half a dozen patches of land of irregular shapes, reclaimed from the moor, some fenced, some unenclosed, and bearing crops of corn and potatoes. The unprotected fields were each under the custody of a ragged

urchin, aided and assisted by a cur dog ; and, for the size of the mansion, the domestic establishment seemed unusually extensive, for the jaunting car brought half a dozen men and women to the door. I advanced to the house, and entered the principal apartment of an Irish cabin, namely, the kitchen—addressed a bare-legged girl, who appeared chief butler of the place, and inquired could I have dinner ; and in return, she dropped a curtesy, and told me she would ask the mistress.

As the men had stepped out upon “the street,” as they term the high road in Ireland, and the females had disappeared elsewhere, I had full leisure to examine the place into which I had introduced myself. The kitchen, which occupied the centre of the cabin, even for a Connaught one, was large ; a huge chimney with an iron gallows to support pots and kettles was then in full occupation, to judge by the numerous culinary vessels thereon suspended. The rafters were garnished with flitches of bacon, balls of worsted yarn,

smoked salmon, and all the miscellaneous etcetera, which betoken rustic comfort; and what struck me as the most extraordinary feature of the whole, the deal table and chairs were critically white; and the floor was neatly swept and sanded.

I had barely completed my inspection, when the door of the sleeping chamber opened, the hostess presented herself, and never was a half-pay officer more agreeably surprised.

Of lowly beauty, she was decidedly the finest specimen I had ever seen; and my astonishment was unbounded, when, in the mistress of a highland pottene house, I found a splendid piece of nature's handiwork. I should say that she had scarcely passed twenty summers. Her figure was tall and graceful; and if dark blue eyes full of intelligence, a profusion of rich auburn hair, teeth exquisitely white and regular, and lips which Sir John Suckling would sonnetize for ever, could, by happy combination, produce

a faultless face, hers was indeed that one. Her attire was also in good keeping; it had nothing either of the slovenliness, or, worst still, the slattern finery of low-life; on the contrary, it was plain, neat, and correctly adapted to her situation.

When we met, the surprise seemed mutual. By whatever designation the biped without stockings had announced the newly-arrived guest, it was certain that the lady hostess was unprepared to receive a gentleman of the sword, in a braided pelisse and military nether garments. She blushed and curtseyed—I advanced, took her hand, paid her the passing compliments which beauty elicits—and ended with a delicate inquiry after dinner—and a hint that the sooner this vulgar incident in life was got over, it would be all the better.

She called loudly for *Kathleeine*, and to that summons, a red-shank¹ promptly re-

¹ A term applied in Connaught to ladies who consider stockings a superfluity.

sponded. "Could my honour put up with a chop, bacon and eggs, broiled salmon, there was a fresh one in the house." For any of these I was perfectly at her service. Orders were instantly issued to bare-legs, who disappeared; and the hostess unclosed a cupboard, poured a glass full of splendid poteenie from an old-fashioned Dutch bottle, and presented it to me with a native elegance that would have put Hebe herself to the blush.

"I drink to your health and happiness," and, raising the glass to my lips, a deep sigh arrested it. The blush had vanished—and a sweeter countenance, more heavily surcharged with sorrow, could not be imagined than that of the beautiful hostess. By an irresistible impulse I caught her hand in mine. "Are you unhappy?" I murmured.

"Unhappy! Oh God! that word describes poorly what I suffer. Let go my hand, sir, you know not where you are. One imprudent word or act of yours might cost you life and

me more misery ; and, Heaven sees the cup has been full enough."

" You are surely a stranger," I replied, as I obeyed her bidding. " These are not the accents of the mountain tongue, nor the language in which a peasant would address me."

" What I am, *I am*. What *I was*, I must not think. To that dress my heart warms—and the sooner its wearer quits this house the better."

A look I never shall forget accompanied this singular intimation ; and while she called loudly for her attendant spirits to expedite the culinary preparations, I strolled out to ascertain that the horse was being sufficiently refreshed, to undertake the remainder of his journey.

The old car-driver was in the stable, feeding his " baste" from a wooden tub—racks and mangers being here unknown.

" Well, will you be able to take the road again shortly ?"

"I wish to God! yer honour gave me the word to put to now!"

"You have not had your dinner, man; a light stomach, we used to say, makes heavy marching. But what shall I call you? Oh, yes, I remember, Ulick—What a pretty woman that landlady is—who is she, Ulick?"

"The wife of Morteeine Crassaugh!" was the reply.

"Now my good old friend, come to the point at once. Morteeine Crassaugh I never wish to see....."

"Nor I—Lord stand betwixt us and evil!" and the driver crossed himself.

Ulick went to the door, looked out, strolled round the shed, ascertained that there were no eaves-droppers, and even then, continued in a whisper—

"She's his third wife; and bad luck attend him! he got her wrongfully."

"Yer dinner's ready, sir," screamed a red-shank from the house. I obeyed the summons, and re-entered the caravansera,

with no addition to my knowledge, and much to my suspicion.

I could not but remark, that in the manner my meal was placed upon the table, there was a simple neatness which would have belonged rather to the road-side inn the English traveller encounters, than the dirty confusion with which an Irish wayfarer is littered down. The hostess—a circumstance even in a porteeine house considered *infra dignitatum*—attended on me. I pressed her to sit down and partake of my dinner; but that was gracefully declined, and I proceeded to discuss my solitary meal, while Ulick was supplied with necessary refreshments in some other department of the hostelrie.

I mentioned that sundry vessels were suspended over the fire; and while I was waiting the removal of the fragments from my table, one of the bare-legged damsels entered the kitchen, bearing a large wooden tray, heaped with mutton cut up in pieces to render its cookery expeditious, and known in Ireland by

the term *spolieenes*. The quantity prepared for the pot attracted my attention; and I remarked there was a sufficiency of meat for the consumption of a troop of dragoons.

“We expect travellers this evening from a fair,” replied the Maritornes of the mountain.

“Travellers!” exclaimed the hostess; and she cast a sidelong look at her attendant full of meaning. “Heaven send that such travellers would seek another inn. Go, fetch fresh water from the spring; this is heated, and unfit to drink.”

The order was obeyed—and the moment the girl disappeared and we saw her pass the window, the pretty hostess in an under voice, contrary to the usage of an inn, urged my departure.

“Evening is coming, sir—your man is fed—your horse is rested. Take my advice, and resume your journey without delay. Be guarded—and the sooner you reach Ballinamore, the better.”

The look which accompanied this advice spoke volumes.

"I understand you," I returned, "and yet I unwillingly obey. There is a mystery about you that interests me. Would that I dare remain, and ask by what singular chance one so fair, and one so unsuited to the situation I find her in, has settled in a place so desolate as this."

"The inquiry would be altogether unserviceable; painful to me—profitless to you. Follow my advice—resume your journey, and leave the wretched to their fate. Ha! so soon! Off, without delay. Let nothing tempt you to remain. I did not expect him back till midnight. Quick—quick!"

I flung the reckoning on the table, remunerated the bare-legged attendant, took up my gun, pressed warmly the hand of the fair hostess, and was lighting a cigar at the fire, when the door opened, and the owner of the hostelry, and husband of the beautiful hostess, presented himself.

Each of us surveyed the other for a few seconds, and both with mutual dislike. My costume, as it afterwards appeared, was not a favourable passport ; and to me, Morteeine's appearance was, at a single glance, enough to ensure my detestation.

The host was a tall, thin, powerful, broad-shouldered man, on the wrong side of fifty, but still active and athletic. The expression of his face most repulsive. The deep pitting, which sometimes marks sufferers from small-pox, had obtained for him the *sobriquet* of *Crassaugh* — and fiery-red hair, a light, but cat-like eye, and a manner altogether indescribable, completed an exterior and address, which, in Irish parlance, a capitalist would give its possessor “sixpence a day for life to keep out of his sight.”

When our mutual inspection was over, I repeated my good evening to the hostess, and proceeded to quit the house ; but with a rude, and, as I thought, insolent familiarity, Morteeine placed himself between me and the

doorway, and insisted that I should drink *doch an durris* before I started. The long, sinewy arm he laid upon my shoulder I turned roughly aside. I saw his brows contract, and his cat-eyes kindle. Another instant, and "to quit or not to quit" would have brought the crisis on, when the landlady united in the request, to which I instantly acceded. I retraced my steps, threw myself upon a form: a furtive glance from the fair hostess approved my conduct; while Morteeine called over a twelve-year old animal, who, from undoubted resemblance to his father, could never be mistaken for any one's progeny but his, whispered to him for a minute, and concluded by saying aloud—

"Dick, agraph—hould you the horse—and tell Ulick, the crature, to come in, and have a drop before he starts."

The order was obeyed, and the lank and red-headed representative of Morteeine Cras-saugh disappeared.

The hostess, on my consenting to drink

the doch an durris, had instantly applied to her cupboard, and the Dutchman was again produced.

"Come, sir," she said, "I know you are anxious to be gone:" and, filling a glass with spirits, she crossed over to the opposite side of the room, where her husband had seated himself, and placed it in his hand. Mine she went merely through the form of replenishing. I understood her meaning, swallowed the few drops of spirits the glass contained, and then declared my fixed intention of taking the road at once.

A curious scene succeeded. The old car-driver quitted the august presence of Morteeine and myself, after swallowing the alcohol, and young red-head came into the kitchen. The elder savage patted the young one on the head.

"*Avourneeine*," he said, "did ye do what I bid ye?"

"*Sha*," was the brief reply.

“Go, get a drap of spirits, and drink the Captain's health.”

Young Hopeful obeyed his father's mandate, and, to my astonishment, turned down a full glass of undiluted whisky.

“Upon my sowl, Captain, I'm not sparin anything on that lad; and a cuter chap ye wouldn't find in a country side. He goes twice a week to Father Hennessey to larn Latin, and I'm bringing him up to.....”

“The gallows!” ejaculated the young hostess. “What devil's errand has he done now, that you praise him so?”

I started. Morteeine's brows contracted; but his young wife returned his scowl with eyes that flashed scorn and defiance. I essayed to speak, but she hastily interrupted me.

“Go, sir; your car is waiting. Family differences are not entertainment for a stranger.”

A sweep of that intelligent eye, as she turned her angry look from her husband, told

all she would have said, and I instantly fell into the humour.

“The commands of beauty must not be disobeyed; and I am sorry that I have already trespassed. Farewell.”

She gave her hand to me with a sullen air, and my pressure was returned by another, warm and significant. Morteeine muttered something in Irish, in which oaths predominated; but, like an attentive landlord, he saw me safe upon the jaunting car, told Ulick to mind the broken bridge, and bade “Heaven speed me!” as I rolled away.

“Oh! the Blissid Vargin be praised, that we’re clane off! Och! af we were only through the pass of Loughtey, and over the bridge at Keil, wouldn’t I be happy!”

“But, Ulick,” I said, interrupting him, “who is that beautiful young woman? and, in the name of everything damnable, how came she to be wife of that ill-featured savage?”

The driver threw his eye back. Nobody

followed : and, as we were traversing an open heath, no eaves-droppers need be feared.

“Feaks ! and yer honor may call him a savage, af ye knew but all. Morteeine’s the terror of the country ; and, betune ourselves, divil a much mischief passes in the barony but he has a finger in it.”

“No matter about Morteeine. His wife, Ulick : what a splendid creature, ‘to waste her sweetness on the desert air.’”

“I don’t exactly understand yer honor about the desert air, but I’ll tell ye all I know about the woman. It’s full fifteen years ago, when the English militia were brought away to be disbanded, that an ould quarter-master, from the chapeness of the country, took it into his head to settle here. He was a widow,¹ and that beautiful crature—and God sees, ye might walk the country for a month of Sundays, and nivir lay eyes upon her fellow—his only child.—Well, the ould man was well to do, and

¹ Very frequently in the West of Ireland the *er* is omitted.

for five or six years he got on well enough, until he bought a farm from a broken squireeine. Two or three bad tenants were noticed by him to quit; but, feaks, he didn't live to see it. He was shot—God be good to his soul!—one Friday morning, in his own garden. Everybody knew who done it; but that's no matter; the man's walkin' stiff and strong through the country—and nobody dare whisper anything against him.

“ Well, his daughter was just sixteen; and when the gentlemen held the inquest on the body, it was found that the old man had died worth six hundred pounds. No one had a guess of where he came from, as he was a stranger in these parts, and niver was heard to mention any relashin, good or bad. After the funeral, his poor daughter was boarded with a snug farmer; and for two years, while she lived there, all the boys in the neighbourhood was lookin' after her, when, one blessed morning, the news came into town that she was carried off the night before, and hid

somewhere in the mountains. Morteeine Crassaugh had only buried his second wife three weeks before; and, though he might be her grandfather, as it turned out afterwards, it was himself that done the job."

Again, on mentioning the dreaded name, Ulick threw a suspicious glance around, and then, lowering his voice, he thus continued—

"I know yer honour's quittin the country for good, an af ye were not, ye would nivir split upon one that trusted to ye. I know all this bad bisniss, from beginning to end; and, as ye take interest in the poor girl's story, I'll tell yer honour as much about it as Morteeine could tell ye himself."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ABDUCTION—NO FAITH IN IRISH JAUNTING CARS—
CONSEQUENCES OF A BREAK-DOWN—THE VICTIM OF
VILLANY.

Oh! weep for the hour,
When, to Eveleen's bower,
The Lord of the valley with false vows came;
The moon hid her light
From the heavens that night,
And wept behind her clouds o'er the maiden's shame.

The clouds past soon
From the chaste cold moon,
And heaven smil'd again with her vestal flame;
But none will see the day
When the clouds shall pass away,
Which that dark hour left upon Eveleen's fame.
MOORE.

“ I had a sister's son—a clane, nice lad he
was, and I was proud of him. In the seven
towns¹ there wasn't a better hurler, and it

¹ Town lands.

would do yer heart good to see him dance the *patter-o-pee*. Unfortunately for himself and me, he took to night-walkin ; and the ribbon-men—curse of God upon the same ! hooked him in, and med a captain of him. He and Morteeine were sworn brothers, and well they might ; for af Captain Starlight was the terror of the country, Captain Firehatch wasn't much behind him."

" Stop, Ulick—and who is Captain Starlight ?" I ejaculated, interrupting the driver's narrative.

An Irish peasant will never answer a dangerous question directly.

" Did yer honor ivir drink *doch an durris* wid a rought-fatured red man ?"

" Ha ! Ulick — I have, with Morteeine Crassaugh."

" Then," returned the car-driver, " I need say no more—' *Tiggum Tigue Tigeeine !* ' "

" Hell and furies !" I exclaimed. " And is this Crassaugh, as ye call him, Captain Star—"

“ Af he’s not, there’s many in the country that belie him.”

“ Well, Ulick, go on with your story.”

“ Where did I lave off?” inquired the old man. “ Och ! about my nephew.”

“ But what has your nephew’s story to do with that of Morteene’s wife?”

“ Why, yer honour, that’s jist what I’m commin to.”

“ Oh, go on at your own pace, Ulick.”

“ I’ll make the story as short as I can. My nephew was informed against—taken when asleep—tried at the assizes. His counsel got him through the murder charge cleverly ; but for robbery of arms he was convicted, and sentenced to be transported for life. I went, the night before he was sent off to Cork, into the jail, and took lave of him ; and thin his heart softened, and he tould me what things laid to his charge were true, and what were not. ‘ Uncle,’ says he, ‘ I’m goin for ivir across the saas ; and of all the acts I done, there’s one that sits heaviest on my conscience.’

—‘And what’s that one, avich?’ says I.—
‘Oh! murder!’ says he; ‘it’s the part I took
in hoisting away poor Mary Handley.’ That’s
Morteeine’s wife, yer honour. ‘Well, says I,
‘Phil, jewel! make a clane breast to your
uncle, and tell it all.’ ”

Dispensing with the numerous interrogatories and replies with which an Irish narrative is always surcharged, the confession of the unfortunate transport was to this effect.—

As a member of the Ribbon association, he had received a secret notice to meet a number of this mischievous fraternity at their accustomed rendezvous—the house of Morteeine Crassaugh—and, on reaching the lonely inn, the young leader found eleven men already assembled, carousing in the inner room, and, as he was informed, awaiting his arrival. All were liberally plied with whisky; and, when they were considered sufficiently excited to undertake the intended task, the host hinted that, unless a pledge was given that they would effect the business with determi-

nation, he would not disclose the nature of it. Would it involve the loss of life? was asked, and a distinct negative was returned. On this assurance, the party unanimously consented. A cross and missal were introduced, and a solemn oath administered that whatever the business was, it should be executed. The test once taken—Morteeine announced the purpose for which the secret meeting had been called—the object was the abduction of the heiress of the murdered quartermaster—the loveliest girl in the barony.

The driver's nephew was a ruffian of milder mood than his fellow-captain, and he ventured to remonstrate. He pleaded the poor girl's orphanage—reminded Morteeine that his wife was but a few days under earth—and pointed out the gross disparity, in point of years, between the intended victim and the abductor. A savage and sarcastic laugh was all that Morteeine deigned to return. To reason with a cold-blooded scoundrel, was to

waste words in vain; the young man was reminded of his oath; and, with desperate fidelity in keeping a pledge, more honoured in the breach than in the observance, Ulick's nephew most reluctantly accompanied the ruffian band on their villanous enterprise.

No difficulty occurred in effecting the commission of the crime. A treacherous servant undid the fastenings of the back door, and gave admission to the gang. The farmer's family, completely taken by surprise, were easily overpowered and secured; the poor orphan was torn from her bed; placed half-dressed before a mounted ruffian; and, leaving the inmates of the house locked up under a guard, the party, with their prize, rode into the interior of the mountains, and secured, in a secluded cabin, the beautiful girl they had ravished from her home. To execute the work of villany with success, Morteeine Crassaugh had made deliberate preparation. In vain military and police scoured the country in all directions; no traces of the

lost one could be found; nor a clue be discovered by which to find the place of her concealment.

When the cause which had occasioned this outrage on her liberty was announced to the victim, and Morteeine named himself as her future lord, reckless ruffian as he was, he quailed before the burst of female indignation with which Mary Handley spurned the addresses of a man she loathed. Her spirit rose superior to her fears; and the young and beautiful orphan evinced such fixed determination to resist a union she detested, that it called forth the astonishment of all concerned, and elicited the admiration of several less obdurate than their savage chief.

But, alas! that nobleness of spirit which, from another, would have commanded respect and change of ruffian purpose, only stimulated the abductor to attain the object of his crime, and effect his most unholy marriage with the victim. A week passed: attempts to recover the lost heiress were considered hopeless, and

given over. The villanous associates of the red innkeeper quitted the mountains, one by one, and returned to their homes, leaving the desolate girl in the custody of two or three savages in female form, and a monster to whom the word pity was unknown.

What followed may be fancied, not described. Another week passed—the ruin of female loveliness was brought at midnight to Morteeine's dwelling—and a degraded friar performed the mockery of a marriage. Through the semblance of a hallowed ceremony, the unhappy girl went, neither assenting nor resisting. The flower was crushed—villany had already done its worst—she felt as if her degradation had left nothing on earth to be hoped for or be feared—her fate was sealed.

A month or two of silent grief gradually wore away, and a change came over the spirit of the injured orphan. Reckless, hopeless, fearless, her mood became that of one too desperate to even think of consequences—and a name that carried fear with it had lost its

terror to her. Morteeine, for the first time, found himself over-matched. His threats were laughed to scorn—his blandishments rejected with contempt. Until his victim attained her majority, the object of his villany could not be reached; for, on her father's murder, she had been put under charge of the Chancellor; and, of course, her fortune, for the present, was secured. From whatever cause he bore it, she bearded the lion with impunity; and, strange as it may appear, a felon spirit, unscrupulous as to means employed, and hackneyed in deeds of violence, cowered before the over-excited *hardiesse* of a beautiful girl of nineteen. "Wait, only, till he grabs her money, sir," observed the car-driver, winding up his tale. "As sure as yer honour and myself are safe and snug upon this jaunting car, Morteeine Crassaugh will be hanged for Mary Handley's murder yet!"

The words had scarcely passed his lips, until his assertions respecting our safety and

snugness were falsified—for off went the off-side wheel; a shaft snapped by the sudden jerk; Ulick was shot into an adjacent bog-hole; and I performed a sort of back somerset, without, however, sustaining the slightest personal inconvenience. When he had evolved from the turf-pit, Ulick proceeded to examine the cause and extent of the calamity; and, on a slight inspection, he commenced crossing himself most devoutly, and imploring the especial protection of the Virgin.

“Oh, holy Moses! we were nivir fairly murdered until now. The wheel aff, the shaft smashed, and us at the back of God speed into the bargain. Oh, my heavy curse upon you, *Morteeine beg!*¹ and may ye want luck iviry day ye see a pavin'-stone, and iviry day that ye don't!”

“Who are you cursing so liberally, Ulick?”

“Arrah! who but that gallows bird, ould Morteeine's son! Troth! the same youth will dance upon nothing, and spoil a market

¹ Little Martin.

before he's twenty. But I might have mistrusted things when his father sent for me to drink; as I know that he loves me about as well as the divil likes holy water."

"But what did the boy do, Ulick?"

"Feaks! he jist did quite enough," replied the driver. "He slipped the litch-pin out, and here we are, nine miles from the next town, and snug and warm at the side of a bog-hole. Och! af I had but a rope wid me at self..."

"If that is all you want, uncord these portmanteaus."

"God bliss yer honour for that same; but, *monasindiaoul!* the arm of the axle-tree is bint wid the shock, and sorra a use to do anything widout Christy Lyons, the smith, and he's a good four mile from this."

"Well, Ulick, what's to be done?"

"Why there's nothing for it, but for yer honour to return to Morteetine's—send a man off for Christy—and I'll stick to the car and baggage till help comes."

Ulick had proposed the only alternative to my remaining on the highway, and mounting guard over my effects; and, as despatch was most desirable, I countermarched the mile we had driven, and once more entered red Martin's hostelry.

Never was a reception more different than that which I experienced from the host and his handsome helpmate.

"Arragh! *ceade millia felteaugh!*" exclaimed Morteeine. "Yer welcome as the flowers in May. Give me a grip of yer honour's fist."

His wife, on the contrary, changed colour; and, in any terms but those which hospitality would use, asked what had caused me to come back.

I explained to her the accident that had occurred; and, while her brows contracted at the statement, I fancied that a smile was interchanged between the owner of the hostelry, and the amiable youth who no doubt would inherit Morteeine's virtues and estates.

"And wherefore did you not push on?" inquired the hostess, brusquely. "Are you a soldier, and regard a walk of ten miles, even though the evening lowers a little?"

"Certainly not," I replied; "but the truth is, I should not like to abandon my arms and baggage in these wild mountains."

"Better lose them than life, however," said the lady.

"Bah! nonsense, Mary," returned her liege lord, in a voice that betrayed rage suppressed with difficulty. "I'll ensure the Captain safe to town for a glass of poteeine, and that's not much. If you take my advice, sir, you'll keep yourself where you are, get your car repaired at daylight, and start as early afterwards as you please. See, was not that a flash of lightning? By Saint Patrick! the storm is about to burst!"

"And if you take my advice," rejoined Morteeine's fair helpmate, "you will proceed without delay; and though you should be

drenched to the skin, leave these mountains behind you."

Halting between two opinions—and so contradictory, too—necessity obliged me to decide at once. A loud and sustained crash, as if the roar of a numerous artillery, was heard booming through the mountains; big drops smote the casement heavily; and then, as if the sluices of the heavens had been suddenly unclosed, down came the rain in torrents. In a few minutes every rill and water-course was filled with discoloured water, that came rushing to the low grounds—and the river, not ancle-deep ten minutes since, now tumbled down a dark volume of inky fluid, intermingled with masses of turf and heather, disrupted from its banks. Fortunately, and just as the tempest broke, Ulick, who had taken alarm at the threatening aspect of the sky, arrived with two or three passing peasants, whom he had judiciously pressed into the service, carrying my whole *materiel*, and

leaving nothing to the despoiler but a broken jaunting car, about as portable a prize as a six-pounder with the trunnions off.

I seized an opportunity, when Morteeine was engaged with a couple of horsemen who had taken shelter from the storm, to join Ulick in the stable. After a hurried lament over our misfortune, the car-driver hinted that, "may be, everything was for the best." The bridge at Keil was broken; and, no doubt, as the storm broke in that direction, the river would have been far too high to allow the car to pass. "It's the will of the Lord," added the old man. "For God's sake, sir, join in no talk with anybody, nor take offence at anything ye see. In his own house, Morteeine will hardly venture on any villany. Return boldly to the kitchen, and go to bed as early as you can."

I obeyed this mentor of the whip, re-entered the kitchen of Morteeine's caravansera, and advanced to the fire, where the hostess was engaged in some culinary pre-

paration. My reception was anything but civil.

“ We shall be crowded to-night,” she said, “ and I wish you had taken your custom to the next inn. This kitchen is small enough for what it has to do ; and I pray you, sir, to retire into the inner room. It has inconvenienced me to give it up, but—”

“ No matter, jewel,” exclaimed the worthy host, who had entered the kitchen from some nook into which he had inducted the horsemen. “ No matter, *Moleeine astore*,¹ ye’ll make him snug, and I’ll have him on the road at daylight. Fetch the candle, and show his honour in ; Lord ! what a thunder-clap ! The storm is not yet at the worst.”

The hostess produced a rude taper, made from goat’s tallow, and which, while affording excellent light, did not, I must admit, exude an odour of “ Araby the blest ;” and, while she inducted me to the great room of the establishment, Morteeine revisited the horse-

¹ Mary Dear.

men to determine the state of the weather over a fresh supply of mountain dew. The moment that the pretty hostess and I were left together, the look so discourteous and repulsive before gave place to one of kindness and compassion, and she inquired, "Why had I been rash enough to return?"

I explained the nature of the accident.

"Oh! yes, I comprehend it. Imperfectly as I understand Irish, I overheard enough pass between that ruffian, to whom the destiny of Heaven has sacrificed me, and the ill-featured boy he is preparing for the hangman, not to feel assured that your journey would be interrupted. I know not exactly what his designs are, but you exhibit sufficient temptation in the valuables you imprudently carry on your person, and the fire-arms you are provided with, to induce Morteeine to plunder you through other agencies than his own. To-night's delay here will enable him to arrange a safe plan for having you stopped and robbed in the

mountains. Fear nothing while you remain ; I can protect you, and I will."

"Strange that one so young can exercise the power you do on a savage spirit such as red Morteeine's," I replied. "With the brave and the noble-minded, loveliness reigns paramount : but what influence beauty could obtain over a sordid, drunken, truculent scoundrel like the wretch who has blighted your fortunes almost in infancy, I cannot even guess."

"*I can*," she said : "my power arises from *his* cupidity and *my* madness."

"Madness !" I exclaimed.

"Yes, madness. Mad I am, although the mood is such as conceals it from the world. What brain could bear what I have endured during the long, long year I have been the victim of that vulgar and ferocious scoundrel ? And, oh God ! how little was I prepared for the deep misery that was impending. Hear, sir, and judge. I loved — this young heart was bestowed upon one who well deserved

it, and, in turn, I was faithfully beloved. William Adderley was the Vicar's only son, and the gentlest and most amiable of beings ; circumstances brought us constantly together—the parsonage was near the farm-house where I was boarded ; the Vicar took a lively interest in my fate ; he was a good man, but a proud one ; and, while my unprotected orphanage secured his warmest sympathy, and I was constantly a visiter at his house, the thought that I should ever hold a nearer claim upon him than that of compassion for a desolate girl, would have wounded him to the soul. Pride yields to love ; and William flung every consideration, touching the superiority that birth and position gave him, to the winds, and wooed and won me. Our vows were plighted in the sight of Heaven ; and, on reaching his majority, in three months I was to have been made a bride. The night I was carried off by the ruffian band, I had met him in a neighbouring glen. We had talked as lovers talk, until the rising moon

warned us to separate. He brought me to the garden-gate, he held me to his bosom, pressed kisses on my lips, and invoked Heaven to bless and shield me. Alas! that prayer was unheard and unheeded; and, when in my dreams I was seated on the heather bank beside him, my head resting on his bosom, his arms around me, his lips touching mine, I was torn from the dreamy embraces of first love, to fill the arms of the truculent monster who made me the wretch I am—lowered to receive the cold pity of the world; and, in my own estimation, degraded below the veriest wretch who cumber the earth with an existence, which the last prayer she breathes to Heaven, ere sleep seals her aching eyes, is that no morrow's sun shall rise upon a living mass of misery. Why then should I not be mad?—why do I beard the lion?—why mar his schemes?—why frown defiance when he threatens?—why express contempt and disgust when he would conciliate one who regards him with the inten-

sity of undying hatred? Because the only wish I have on earth is to perish by his hand, and my prayers are that the wretch who robbed me of my honour should also deprive me of that existence which his villany has rendered too miserable for endurance. Hark! was not that the sound of wheels? Yes; I hear voices without rise in the pauses of storm. How chilly the evening feels! Come to the fire in the outer room, until I have one lighted in this chamber," she said, led the way out, and I followed her.

Before a minute had elapsed the door opened; and the travellers, whose carriage-wheels had already announced their advent, entered the kitchen of the hostelry.

Never did two guests present themselves more unexpectedly on a tempestuous evening, to claim wayfaring hospitality at the establishment of Morteeine Crassaugh, than the strangers. The elder traveller was a man well stricken in years, whose appearance and demeanour happily described his profession.

At a glance, I set him down to be a churchman of superior rank; and the mild and unassuming style of his address was in happy keeping with the vocation he had selected. Advancing to the hostess, he announced himself an Englishman; and told her that, anxious to visit the sister island, he had been for a few days a tourist in the neighbourhood. He had taken the mountain route, induced by a flattering description of its scenery; and, overtaken by an unexpected storm, he must solicit for himself, his daughter, and attendants, refreshment and shelter for the night.

Had innkeepers been even more flinty-hearted than parents are said to be, the most savage host who ever "wielded spigot" could not have refused a claim so mildly and modestly preferred. The stranger's voice seemed to have a magical effect on Mor-teeine's helpmate; and the shrewish manner she adopted, when addressing others, underwent an instant change. She apologized for the indifferent accommodation her house afforded;

from the severity of the night, it was crowded; but such refreshment as could be had was freely at their service. She must remind them that they were not in an English inn, but an Irish cabin; and they must balance indifferent fare against a hearty welcome. Would not the young lady come forward to the fire? The evening was damp and chilly.

As if alarmed at finding herself among strangers, and the inmate of a wild and isolated dwelling, the old man's daughter had remained standing behind her father while he had addressed the hostess of the inn. Modestly and gracefully she bowed her thanks, and accepted the invitation; and, lifting the veil which had hitherto concealed her from observation, Holy Senanus! frigid as Tom Moore is pleased to represent you, she exhibited a face which would have made you curse the hour you ever took the oaths of celibacy!

Reader! you must be patient until next

chapter, and be contented with an intimation that, in presenting to you the pretty tourist, I shall have introduced you to MRS. O'SULLIVAN !

CHAPTER XXXII.

MARY HARDING—AN IRISH HOSTELRIE.

Whose voice is heard ? Whose carbine rang ?
Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
Too nearly, deadly aimed to err ?
'Tis thine !"

The Bride of Abydos.

When the fair traveller raised her veil, I was most agreeably gratified by the imperfect exhibition of a very pretty face ; but when, at the suggestion of the hostess, she delivered her bonnet to her maid, and, in the parlance of a man-milliner, unshawled afterwards, one minute placed me *hors de combat*. The first look had elicited unqualified admiration ; but, on a second and a longer examination of the sweet wayfarer, it was all over with me.

Mary Harding—for over my destiny the

name of Mary exercised a paramount influence—was scarcely nineteen. Hers was the outline of a girlish figure which a few years would mature to womanly perfection. I have looked at more commanding beauty, but never on so sweet a face. I have stood the assault of haughty loveliness, which, as a prescriptive right, demanded instant admiration. No thrilling glance flashed from Mary's soft blue eye, but her gentle and expressive look said, or seemed to say, "love me not, if you can." It was not the rich luxuriance of her auburn hair—teeth of pearly whiteness, or lips that a cardinal might kiss, and obtain an easy absolution—every feature was harmonized for love—and it was the *ensemble* of the countenance that played the devil.

But a few minutes had elapsed from the time that the wheels of the stranger's carriage had interrupted my *tête-à-tête* with Morteeine's wife, until, as Jack Falstaff would say, I was "past praying for." The host was either too agreeably occupied with the travellers he had

attached himself to, or prevented by the storm from hearing the arrival of new guests, for all the preliminary matters were completed, and the lady, her father, and myself in free conversation at the kitchen fire, before the red landlord favoured us with the light of his countenance. He had come in for a fresh supply of whisky—and it was quite apparent that during his temporary absence, time had not been wasted by the worthy man in discussing “thin potations”—Morteeine Crassaugh, in Irish parlance, was regularly *slewed*.

I remember the pleasant relict of a defunct field officer used the remark after her liege lord had dined at mess—“For Heaven’s sake, my dear M—, send poor, dear, Bob home, either with one bottle only under his belt, or else be sure and make it *two*—for when he has got that ‘curse-a-God three pints’ in, the devil would not stand him!” Morteeine’s allowance, I fancy, had just touched the three-pint scale, for he was confoundedly cross, and

his cat-like eye had a more feline expression than before. He made a surly inclination of the head to the strangers, and then inquired, "Were the gentlefolks sheltering from the shower?"

"Shower!" exclaimed his helpmate, with a contemptuous glance, while at the moment, a flash of lightning blazed across the window, and a peal of thunder appeared to rock the house. "Shower!" she repeated. "Call it by the right name—storm!—This gentleman and lady stop here for the night."

"The night?"—returned red Martin with a frown—"Is the girl doting? The only room we have is engaged by this gentleman already."

"And which he surrenders with great pleasure to the lady, and hopes, if the fire be kindled sufficiently, that she will do him the honour of taking instant possession."

I made a deferential bow; the lady smiled graciously; Morteeine, I thought, was inclined to enter a demurrer to the arrangement; but

his young wife put the matter at an end, by lighting the lady and her maid into the disputed chamber, after admonishing her attendants to hurry supper.

Whatever the cause might be, the addition to his company, which generally gladdens the heart of an innkeeper, had an opposite effect on Morteine Crassaugh. Unlike Lord Duberley, he wished, at least for that night, "for no more custom to the shop;" and after replenishing a large pewter measure with poteine, he again returned to his company. In the course of half an hour, the inner room was arranged to the young lady's satisfaction, and a homely but comfortable supper was served by the hostess in person.

Of course, I was made an honorary member of the old gentleman's mess; and, fascinated with the beautiful girl to whom I was introduced under such singular circumstances, I half-resolved to give that young hump, Morteine beg, a half-a-crown in the morning, for abstracting Ulick's litch-pin, and leaving us on

the king's high-road. An hour passed—the storm continued—and when the thunder-clap was heard, and the rain-drops smote the casement, seated snugly beside the bog-deal fire, the old gentleman was liberal in his thanks for having obtained such comfortable accommodation, and his sweet daughter looked hers most eloquently.

Our sole attendant was the handsome hostess; and I remarked that when she latterly entered the room, her manner was hurried and confused. She opened the door of a cupboard—looked for a moment as if she wanted something within it—then, passing behind my chair, she whispered in my ear—"Be cool and cautious; in five minutes, enter that closet," and she pointed to a small door in the corner of the apartment—"open the window, and I will tell you more. The safety of the strangers rests in their ignorance of danger, and on you and me, under Heaven, their deliverance depends!"

Before the prescribed time had expired, I

obeyed the commands of the pretty landlady, entered the inner room, and placed myself at the window after quietly opening the sash. In a few minutes Morteine's wife stole softly round the house, and joined me.

"Hist!" she said in a whisper — "Pass through the casement. Follow me—Look, listen, and be silent!"

In a moment I hopped out of the window, and followed the hostess on tip-toe. She led me round the gable of the house, ensconced me under the shoulder of a peat-stack, pointed to a little window, and whispering that she would watch against surprise, and warn me if danger should appear, she vanished and left me *en embuscade*.

You may rest assured, gentle reader, that I let no time slip until I turned eves-dropper. In Ireland, for this gentlemanly occupation, the casement of a country inn affords the most tempting advantages, as it is invariably provided with a broken pane, which to any person without, who is desirous of being edified

by the conversation within, is decidedly an immense convenience. In the *sanctum* in which Morteeine was combining business with pleasure, a square of glass had been replaced with the fragment of an old newspaper, and it had proved a sorry substitute, and yielded to wind and rain. “*Fas est ab hoste deceri*” is a saw as old as the hills — and faith ! without ceremony, I availed myself of the “breach in his battlement,” and made myself an *outsider* of Morteeine Crassaugh’s privy council.

The host, if appearances might be trusted, was in “villanous company.” Two of the party were the horsemen I had seen alight at the inn early in the evening ; the third had arrived immediately before Mr. Harding and his daughter ; and while we remained in the kitchen he stood before the fire drying his wet clothes, and, as I remembered, looking occasionally at the young lady with a rude familiarity which induced me to press her retirement to the state apartment that had been assigned to me. Honest the travellers might

be; but certainly looks went sadly against that conclusion. Fire-arms of sundry kinds were laid upon the table—rather unusual appurtenances to a peaceable symposium; and indeed, judging by their exterior, there was not one of the *partie quarie* who would not cry “Stand to a true man!”

He who had last arrived fixed my attention more particularly than his companions. He was a tall, slight, dark-visaged young man, with coal-black hair, and a most forbidding countenance. Seated directly opposite the broken pane, every word he uttered I heard distinctly as if I had been beside him.

“It’s an infernal business,” observed Mor-teeine, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe upon the table, and proceeded to replenish it anew; “and ye darn’t stand yer ground, ye think, Pat *avourneene*?”

“Yes,” replied the dark stranger, “if I wanted to be hanged at the next commission. Suspicion as to my share in Brooke’s murder long since was strong enough against me: but

now that Phely Brannigan has turned approver, I wouldn't have the ghost of a chance. The country's too hot to hold me now—but d—n me, if I part it, without doing something to make them remember the name of Pat Durneen."

"There will be but a thin meeting of the boys to-night," observed a second, "if the storm does not blow over speedily."

"Not at all," returned the host. "There's a dozen of them in the kitchen already."

"Then," exclaimed the dark scoundrel, with an oath, "hit or miss, I'll bundle the girl off, and trust to fortune."

"It would be madness," replied red Martin, "little advantage to yourself, Pat, and certain ruin to me."

The dark stranger knitted his brows, filled and turned down a glass of whisky, and was evidently about to reply, when a slight pressure of my arm caused me to look round suddenly, and the hostess was beside me.

"It is thirteen months, Morteeine Crassaugh,"

said the dark-visaged stranger, "since I obeyed your summons, and met eleven others in this very room; and when ye proposed that we should carry off yer present wife, all but myself refused to have act or part in it. Well, I got them round by degrees, and you swore, when I put down Mary Hamblyn from behind me in the sheelien in the mountain, that the first thing I asked from you would be freely granted, even were it the killing of a man. I got ye the finest girl and the biggest fortune in the country. I want a wife now, Morteeine; she's under yer roof, and mine she shall be before the sun rises to-morrow."

"I don't deny the promise, Pat," replied the red landlord. "A wife ye got me, and the very ground I walk upon she despises, and from the bottom of my conscience, I believe that the only sight could give her pleasure, would be my wake. Fortune she has, but how she divil am I to get at it? I must bear with her for another twelvemonth, until she comes of age. Let me, then, grip the money,

and, monasindiaoul! if I won't make ye, Mary Hamblyn, rue the day ye trated me with scorn and contempt!"

Again my arm was pressed, and it was evident that the intended civilities of Morteeine were not passed by unheeded by his consort.

"But what sudden fancy, Pat, have ye taken for this girl?"

"From the moment I saw her by the light of the kitchen fire, I swore that she should be mine. I must hide myself, you know, till Phely Branigan is silenced by a slit of the windpipe. Well, Morteeine, a pretty girl, will help me to get over the time pleasantly in the mountains; and when we're tired of one another, why, if the old fellow makes it worth my while, he shall have the lady back again."

"But then suspicion must fall on me," returned Morteeine.

"And why should it?" observed the dark scoundrel. "If your house is broke into, and

a woman bundled off, is it your fault that ye couldn't bate a dozen men? Can't ye fire a shot or two, and be the first to give information in the morning to the police?"

"And then that d—d soldier fellow that I unluckily detained, by making wee Martin slip out a linch-pin to break him down—I have him set to-morrow at the gap of Scullagh—he's well armed, and looks like a chap that won't give in. There's no less than three gun-cases with his luggage in the room where they are sitting after supper."

"So much the better," was the reply. "Next to a pretty wife, the thing I want most is a good gun."

"Yes," returned Morteine, "but the contents may be delivered before the owner thinks proper to part with it."

"Pshaw! there is but one man. What chance would he have against a score?"

"Not much, if taken unawares," said the red scoundrel; "but when a man's desperate and well-armed, he's not to be trifled with, Pat."

"No matter," and the ruffian swore an awful oath; "if I'm a livin' man, I'll have the girl and the gun within an hour. Morteeine, desert me, if you dare!"

"If it must be so, it must," replied the host; "and now, remember, Pat Durneein, if bad comes of this business, it's clane against my advice, and no one's to blame but you."

"I'll stand it, Morteeine. Fill a glass apiece, and here's more power to our elbows! Go out and give the boys in the kitchen a drop of whisky, to put them in spirits for the job. I'll stand the reckoning."

Touching my arm, the hostess gave the signal for retiring, and I followed her. When we were sufficiently removed from all fear of being overheard, she hastily addressed me—

"The trial must come, and it will be a fearful one. You are desperately committed, sir; for, as a soldier, you dare not but protect that sweet and unsuspecting girl from a fate as terrible as mine has been."

"Protect her!" I half exclaimed.

“ Hush ! speak low—walls, they say, have ears.”

“ Durneein,” I whispered in her ear, “ your words are prophetic. Within an hour, you promised that the girl and the gun should be yours, ‘ were you a living man ;’ that condition was correctly introduced when you made the vow ; for within that space, brief as it is, you shall be a dead one.”

“ I must be in the kitchen to evade suspicion, when my rascal husband shall come out of that scene of iniquity, where he and his confederates are drowning in whisky every latent spark of humanity. The attempt upon the lady will not be immediate. Return by the window, break Durneein’s design prudently to the strangers, prepare for the worst, and, before the storm bursts, I will re-visit you.”

I obeyed the order, entered and closed the casement, and, with all the coolness I could command, apprized the strangers of their danger. The calmness with which both re-

ceived the fearful intelligence was admirable. A quiet appeal to Heaven for protection, and an humble submission to the decrees of that Great Being, who directs the destinies of all, were the only expressions which escaped the lips of the old man or his daughter. I prepared for action—and, fortunate in the possession of three double guns and a case of pistols, I felt myself a giant.

Presently the door opened, and the landlady came in; her lips were bloodless, her eyes wild with apprehension, and her voice had dropped to an ominous whisper.

“May Heaven protect you!” was her kind but alarming address. “The wretches are now steeled against pity, and ready to perpetrate any villanous deed. Had better feelings been latent in their breasts, they are extinguished by the infernal influence of poteeine. I’ll bar the windows, and bring fresh candles. You are ready, I perceive,”—and her eyes rested on the table, where my fire-arms were disposed. “Absence would create suspicion.

I must hasten, and then consign you to God's providence, a good cause, and a stout heart."

In another minute she returned, placed additional lights in the room, told me to barricade the door, and when the hour of trial came, to conduct the lady and her father into the closet, and "do my best afterwards."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AGREEABLE WIND-UP TO AN EXCURSION IN SEARCH OF
THE PICTURESQUE IN CONNAUGHT.

Poins. — Pray God, you have not murdered some of them.

Falstaff. — Nay, that's past praying for.

SHAKSPEARE.

Quietly I bolted the door, and heaped every portable article the chamber contained against it, and, when my preparations were completed, requested Miss Harding and her father to retire. The old gentleman would have remained, but I assured him that by doing so personal risk would be uselessly incurred—his daughter also would require support, and there only his services could be valuable. Circumstances abated ceremony; I placed Mary

Harding in the closet, led her father in, and left them in present security.

I had scarcely returned to the outer room, until shuffling feet and whispering voices were audible without, and presently the latch was lifted stealthily, and the door was slightly shaken. Directly before the entrance of the chamber, I had placed the lights; and in the darker portion of the chamber, I took my stand, with the table on which my spare arms lay beside me. Again the latch was raised, and a low voice announced to his companions that "the door was bolted." Another voice desired the speaker to knock; the order was obeyed, and a brief parley followed, before a bloody fray commenced.

"Who's there?" I inquired.

"A friend," was the reply.

"That friend must wait where he is till morning."

"Quick—undo the fastenings—I must get in;" and in the voice that made the demand

I recognized the well-remembered tones of Durneein.

“The young lady has retired. I am on duty here: and, friend or enemy as you may be, no footstep with life this night shall cross the threshold.”

“D—n it!” exclaimed another, “why do you stand babbling there? Dash in the door!”

A crush against it succeeded—the bolt sprang—the door yielded—and an opening was made sufficiently large to admit a man’s arm, which was unceremoniously thrust in, and, from the peculiar colour of the coat-sleeve, told me that Durneein was the foremost scoundrel of the party. Already devoted to the infernal gods, the victim seemed to present himself for the sacrifice. I marked the spot upon the door behind which the breast of the bandit was leaning; a steady aim was followed by a loud explosion—through the thin deal which separated us, the wire-

cartridge passed like a bullet, and lodged in the villain's ear—the arm suddenly disappeared; the carcase to which it belonged was already clay; for Durneein did not carry life to the floor.

Fierce and varied exclamations announced the leader's fall, and two or three shots were returned at random through the door. I was out of the line of fire; the bullets flattened harmlessly against the wall; and I was reloading the empty barrel, when suddenly the outer door of Morteeine's *hostelrie* was beaten open with a sledge, a number of strangers sprang into the kitchen, and a loud voice called on the dead ruffian's gang, to instantly throw down their arms and surrender. The order was not obeyed, and a short but sharp *melée* ensued, in which firearms were discharged, and blows interchanged between the combatants. I imprudently ran forward to the room-door, to take part in the affray, when a stray slug passed through the wood-work, and lodged in my shoulder. Next moment, the struggle was over — the scoundrels

were overpowered and made prisoners — and the same voice which had called on the ruffians to yield, requested me to give him admittance. As quickly as my disabled arm could effect it, I removed the lumber piled against the door, and an officer of police entered, who congratulated me on my deliverance.

It would be impossible to conjecture what the result might have been, had not the providential arrival of an armed body saved us from further conflict with ruffians, rendered doubly desperate by drunkenness and the death of their captain. The police had not the least intimation that a banditti were collected at Morteeine's house, their errand being only to arrest the worthy proprietor, against whom an approver had given such extensive information, that it eventuated in the red landlord being transported for life. Hence, the opportune arrival of the officers of justice was most providential, and a desperate calamity averted by prompt deliverance.

Excepting the splintered door, flakes torn from the plastered walls by the shots fired through the damaged woodwork, the smell of powder, and the parade of firearms, there was nothing in the apartment to prove offensive; and Mr. Harding and his daughter were at once emancipated from the dark hiding-place that had sheltered them in their hour of need.

There is a passive courage of which milder spirits are capable, which fiercer souls marvel at, but cannot understand. For my own part, I disclaim the heroic altogether—and am ready to declare, before any justice of the peace, that I would rather part with all the property of which Falstaff was robbed behind the arras, than date a letter from the station-house, or even put in a pleasant evening at Donnybrook fair. Homicide is no test of bravery; and of twenty gentlemen, of high and low degree, put “past praying for,” nineteen casualties result from common sense rather than from uncommon courage. I had been

placed in a position when to act and to live were synonyms. I had the means and the position for offence. Had I been unhappily nervously constituted, and remained non-resistant, disgrace were certain, and death a probable consequence. Homicide was forced upon me. There are — start not, gentle reader—circumstances in life, when any hesitation in shedding blood stamps an individual with worse than imbecility. When an Irish patriot misses fire at you upon the highroad, and you have the means of giving him his *quietus*, would you permit him to hammer his flint, and try his luck again? or, should a brutal bully call you to the field, and you be so stupid as to accept the invitation, did you not endeavour to introduce half an ounce of lead into his person, and as contiguous to his watch-pocket as could be done conveniently, were I next of kin, and you worth the expense of a “*lunatico inquirendo*,” you should forthwith, by “twelve good men and true,” be declared *non compos*, and I should have great

pleasure myself in conducting you to the asylum.

The calm and holy submission with which Mr. Harding and his beautiful child heard me announce the dreadful calamity that appeared inevitable, did not desert them during the brief but painful interval of trial and uncertainty. Locked fondly in each other's arms, I found them standing in the dark apartment, waiting the dreaded issue. Confused by the uproar which had attended the attempt upon the chamber, and the onslaught from without, I had twice to announce their providential rescue, before they could be assured that they were in safety. The test of sorrow is sometimes bravely withstood by those to whom the agony of sudden joy proves fatal—and in this case, the tidings of their deliverance occasioned a greater shock than the announcement of previous danger. The father, with the assistance of the police-officer, with difficulty reached a chair—but the fair girl

uttered a cry of delight, and fainted in my arms. I called aloud for help: the bustle had partially subsided, the hostess heard my summons, and hurried from the kitchen to assist me.

Pallid and corpse-like as the beautiful stranger looked who was resting on my bosom, the peaceful similitude of death might cause grief but not alarm. Mary Hamblyn's appearance, however, as she hung over Miss Harding, was very different. She, too, was pale as marble; but the wildness of her flashing eyes, the writhing of her bloodless lips, the hurried action of every limb—all spake a "perturbed spirit," and a reason all but overthrown by excitement too great to bear. Although the frame was sadly shattered, courage almost incredible sustained her—and wild and fierce as look and manner might be, her language was cool and collected. She took Miss Harding gently from my grasp, reclined her on a bench, directed

me to bring water from the table—then, pointing to my bleeding arm, she said, in a low voice—

“Go; get your wound bound up. I will watch the lady’s recovery. ’Tis a sorry sight without. Another look at that loathsome wretch, who lies upon the floor, I think would have upset the little reason that now is left me. See! her eyes open. Go, sir: when your hurt is attended to, the lady will be able to thank you for her deliverance.”

I left the invalid to her care, and entered the kitchen for the first time since the affray. As Mary Hamblyn had described it, in truth it was a sorry sight. Stretched upon his back, and resting in a pool of blood, his features horribly convulsed, and his glassy eyes apparently turned upwards upon mine, the dead robber was extended; and, as his feet touched the threshold of the chamber-door, I was obliged to stride over the prostrate carcase of my enemy.

The huge fireplace had been heaped with

bog-deal, and a red and brilliant blaze lighted the large room, and showed everything distinctly. It was a scene that Salvator Rosa might have painted with effect. Another corpse was extended in the corner where the dead man had fallen on his face, and ten or twelve others, on whose dejected countenances a savage desperation was marked, were seated in a group, all with pinioned arms, and several with gashed faces, which they had received in the *melée*. Morteeine Crassaugh was placed apart from the others, securely bound, and guarded; while the dark figures of the police, with green uniforms and bright appointments, formed a striking contrast to their grey-coated prisoners, and perfected a group which a painter might have happily used to depict a captive banditti.

The *gendarmerie*—for that term best describes an Irish police force—respectfully made way for me, and I approached the chair on which the red landlord was seated.

It is amazing how rapidly the insolence of

ruffianism yields, when calamity overtakes it. The cool assurance of Morteetine's address—the covert impudence he assumed when he used the mockery of deference to a stranger—all had departed; and the humiliated tone in which he addressed me now, when compared with the assured manner he had an hour ago exhibited, was singularly striking. His object was to impress upon all around, that in the violence recently committed, he was not only a party unconcerned, but a person who had opposed the attempt. While defending himself from suspicion, I opportunely came in, and the red landlord instantly appealed to me as a supporting witness.

“Captain,” he said, “isn't it too bad for a man to be charged with a crime of which he's innicint as little Morteetine there! Pat Derneein”—and he apostrophized the corpse of the dead brigand—“ye had a sudden and a bloody end. May the Lord rest yer sowl! act and part, the deed was yours by which

ye suffered, and it was myself that endeavoured to prevent it."

For once in his life, according to the Irish phrase, Morteeine Crassaugh "told truth and shamed the devil;" and I, who had overheard him remonstrate against the abduction of the lady, bore testimony to the assertion of innocence he was endeavouring to establish. A triumphant smile crossed the red landlord's face at the success of this appeal to me, but the look of exultation was short-lived.

"Morteeine," said a policeman, "it would be well if you could produce as good testimony as the Captain's, in old Farmer's business. Tom Reynolds was caught last night, and in a trap of his own setting too. Finding himself deserted by his friend the devil, he determined to play the same game, and give his old companions the go-by. He has split from first to last; and if a jury will believe him, he'll send two or three, you know of, to the gallows, and half a score across the sea."

Before the communication was ended, the

smile faded from the face of the conscious criminal; and, turning his eyes away, he gazed listlessly at the fire; and while my wound was being bandaged, a word never escaped his lips.

The bullet had passed through my arm, but fortunately without injury to the bone. A tight ligature stopped the hæmorrhage—a handkerchief knotted at the neck formed a convenient sling—and having repaired damages, and requested the police to throw a covering over the bodies, and remove the bloodmark from the floor, I rejoined my fellow-travellers in the inner room.

I had left Miss Harding in care of the pretty hostess, but during my absence their relative positions had changed; and when I returned, the lady was lavishing the gentlest attentions on Mary Hamblyn, whose overpressed energies had at last given way, and the woman had resumed the mastery. Dissolved in tears, and sobbing as if every inspiration would announce a broken heart, still

what a happier change her altered mood exhibited ! Excitement, bordering upon insanity, had given a wild, almost a demoniac expression to features decidedly handsome as hers were—now sorrow had softened it down, and in my life I never witnessed the seductive influence of woman's tears, until I joined in the exertions of the beautiful stranger, to soothe Mary Hamblyn's grief, and bid her to be comforted.

Another scene, and one in which I was chief actor, followed. In my absence from the room, Mr. Harding and his daughter had been fully acquainted with the extent of the danger they had so happily escaped. Both thanked me ardently ; but what was the old man's gratitude, as he wrung my hand, and invoked Heaven's blessing on his preserver, to the silent eloquence with which his artless child turned her sweet eyes on mine, glanced at my wounded arm, and looked her sympathy and gratitude ? It was a passage in a life never to be forgotten.

“ I owe you, sir, more than can be imagined or expressed,” she faltered, “ a debt that—”

“ Thus is cancelled.”

Circumstances annihilate conventional proprietors. I placed my lips to those of the blushing girl. Her father smiled and muttered something of “ a poor reward for a wounded arm ;” and Mary coloured to the brows, cast her eyes upon the floor, “ but yet she chid not.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IRISH REPORTING — I ATTEMPT THE SENTIMENTAL —
LETTERS OF CONGRATULATION—GET INTO TROUBLE WITH
ANOTHER MARY—PROPOSE, AND AM REJECTED.

Fenton.—I see I cannot get thy father's love ;
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

* * * * *

Anne Page. What would you with me ?

Slender. Your father and my uncle have made motions :
if it be my luck, so ; if not, happy be his dole !

Merry Wives of Windsor.

Again the action of the drama changed—
and Mary Hamblyn became the most prominent of the “dramatis personæ.” I had been but an instrument in her hands. I had retarded the catastrophe, and given time for the arrival of the police, accidental as it afterwards proved fortunate. But, without Mary's agency, Miss Harding would have

been in a position which one shudders even to imagine. In such a quarrel, a craven would have resisted to the death; I must have perished in her defence, and been consigned to the tomb of the O'Sullivan's; and her poor father—what would his sufferings have been? To weep for the dead may be distressing—to mourn for the dishonoured, how much more severe!

Mr. Harding, who probably waited until the outburst of stormy sorrow gave place to

“The composure of settled distress,”

now addressed himself to Mary and to me.

“To you, sir, and that suffering girl, I am indebted deeper than aught in my power to offer were sufficiently worthy to repay. By a merciful intervention of a directing Providence, I have been preserved from a death of violence, and my child from a more calamitous fate—a life of degradation. You, sir, are beyond the offerings of gratitude, excepting my thanks and prayers; but, God be praised, the power is mine, of proving how deeply I

feel the services this desolate female has conferred. I am blest with an abundance of this world's goods, but there stands the tie which binds me to the earth—the only object which makes life valuable. Had I lost gold and property, it would have been easily replaced ; but had I been rifled of my treasure”—and he clasped his sobbing daughter to his heart—“ existence would then have been a burthen, the grave my only hope ; my only prayer, to have ‘ the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest.’ From a fearful calamity I have been delivered by two strangers. Fortune has placed one beyond the reach of recompense ; but fate kindly offers an opportunity of making an offering of gratitude to the other. Mary,” he continued, “ in me your murdered father is restored ; and in her, whom you snatched from wretchedness, behold your future protectress. The roof that shelters me shall shelter thee ; and when it pleases Him who gave life to revoke the boon, you shall find that your future settlement in the

world will not have been neglected. Will you accept an old man's offer?"

"Accept it!" she exclaimed, her eyes sparkling with delight. "Oh! bring me from this vile place, and into another country, where a soil I am bound to curse shall, if possible, be forgotten, and I will be your slave."

"No, no; not my slave, but my child. Go—prepare—we start at daylight."

The night had insensibly worn away, and my watch told that sunrise was at hand; and while the fair landlady went out to make some necessary preparations for quitting the hostelrie of Red Martin for ever, I proceeded to the stable to see that the horses were being fed, and that all was in readiness to commence our journey. In passing through the kitchen to reach the yard, I was pleased to find that my orders had been obeyed. The blood-stained floor had been cleansed, and freshly sanded; and although the police did not consider themselves justified in re-

moving the dead bandits from the places where each had fallen, cloths had been thrown over the bodies, and very offensive objects were thus shut out from sight.

When the morning had sufficiently broken, and our journey was about to be resumed, it was intimated by the officer of the constabulary that our attendance at the coroner's inquest would be indispensable—an assurance that we would not quit the country until after this proceeding of the law was demanded and complied with ; and, escorted by half-a-dozen mounted policemen, we took the road once more. As being an easier vehicle for the transport of a wounded man, Mr. Harding insisted that I should occupy his place in the carriage, while he, with the pretty hostess—who, most unceremoniously relieving herself "*evinculo matrimonii*"—mounted the jaunting car, which the driver had, in some manner, got repaired. I objected to expose the old gentleman to the extra quantity of exercise which Ulick's

vehicle would administer ; but, as he was determined, my repugnance to be left *tête-à-tête* with his sweet daughter was speedily overcome. On this occasion, I must confess that a feebler resistance was never offered by one who had so recently "peppered" a highwayman.

I must hurry my narrative on. We reached the post town, obtained comfortable apartments at the inn, and, for a Connaught caravansera, found the Dun Cow very passable. A delay of three days took place before the proceedings of the inquest were concluded, and a verdict of "Justifiable homicide" was returned.

Of course, an occurrence such as that which conferred on red Morteine's establishment an Irish celebrity, was duly chronicled—ran the round of the newspapers—and, for aught I know to the contrary, like the Red Barn murder, was dramatized afterwards. An Hibernian journalist never understates his casualties ; and in the amount of killed on

this occasion, private correspondents differed widely. In one thing, however, they did agree; the number of the slain was trebled; and every scratch, even to a scraped shin, which a policeman sustained in the onslaught, by tumbling over a washing-tub, was declared, on the authority of Surgeon Tool, of Knocknavaddy, mortal. Mine, albeit neither "deep as a draw-well, nor wide as a church-door," was returned the most lethal hurt of all; and, according to the Carrickbyrne Reporter—a ballad-sized periodical, which undertook to give the latest news, and issued from the press once a fortnight—I was lying without a hope of recovery in the best bed-room of the Dun Cow, indefatigably attended by Miss Harding, who had never undressed since the accident, and most ably treated by Doctor O'Dogherty, whose attentions were only surpassed by his skill. Heaven forgive the wicked editor! Excepting when in attendance on the inquest, I was rambling in an adjacent park, or sauntering along the

river-bank with the young lady hanging on my better arm, and making love to the very best of my ability. Still, as these Milesian inaccuracies might cause uneasiness to my friends, I wrote a few lines to the headquarters of the regiment, and a more detailed account to my uncle. In my letter to him, I mentioned that I was travelling with Mr. Harding, named his daughter as a being whom "youthful poets fancy when they love," and desired him to direct his answer to the Bilton Hotel, where I should receive it on my arrival in Dublin.

I never attempted the sentimental that I did not suffer for the same ; and now, *Diabolo suadente*, I determined to do a little in the romantic. In Miss Harding, I had obtained the woman whom I had fancied but never found before, a being amply qualified to make me happy. Accidental services had already won her gratitude ; and gratitude, like pity, "is close akin to love." She was an heiress—the only child of an opulent father ;

circumstances had predisposed the old gentleman to listen favourably to my suit. Of course, he had a right to seek a wealthy alliance for his daughter; and, heir to my uncle, I had only to express a wish upon a subject, which my knowledge of his matrimonial designs against my liberty induced me to conclude would be everything but disagreeable. Hence, I had little doubt that, in a worldly point of view, my proposals would pass muster. Would my suit succeed, were my fortune but a sword, and nothing to counterpoise a scale weighed down by "jointured lands" on the lady's part, but on mine the flinging in a defunct highwayman to restore the balance? Could I but so far make way in the lady's affections, and in her father's estimate of service rendered, as to win her love and his consent! no present assets but ten shillings and sixpence a day; no prospect in the distance but the chance of a majority at fifty, were I but lucky enough to bury a few hundred gen-

tlemen, who stood between me and the object of my ambition. Were I, a poor soldado, so fortunate as to woo and win my bride, despite the withering drawback of my poverty, would it not enhance the glory of such a conquest, and render me the proudest and the happiest gentleman on the half-pay list? Egad! I would make the attempt accordingly — like another Norval, I gave a most unpretending description of myself; and, to a casual inquiry if I were related to Sir Cæsar O'Sullivan, I repudiated my loving uncle at once, and declared that I had never seen him in my life. The scheme was very sentimental and dramatic; but, in the long run, it turned out that the only one imposed on was the projector—to wit, myself.

We proceeded leisurely on our journey, passed the boundary of the kingdom of Connaught at Athlone, and once more found ourselves in modern Europe. On reaching Bilton's, divers letters were awaiting our

arrival, and I retired to my own chamber, to inspect this voluminous correspondence.

About a dozen of the despatches were congratulatory on my escape; one was directed in a lady's hand, and gallantry gave it precedence. It was indited by "the fair bedfellow" of the senior Major, a gentlewoman, as advertising governesses sometimes describe themselves, of "decided piety," and who had been long labouring, and, I lament to add in vain, to work a regimental reformation. She declared, in her friendly missive, that Heaven had been especially merciful in conducting me to Morteeine Crassaugh's hotel. I differed in opinion altogether, and thought mercy lay in taking me out of that pleasant establishment. Now the doubt between the Major's helpmate and myself, for which act I should be thankful, brought to my recollection the story of the Irishman who had been ridden over by the castle-guard. "Ah! young man," observed an old gentlewoman to Pat, as he slowly gathered his

person from the pavement, "it's yourself that ought to return thanks to the Blessed Virgin every mornin that ye rise!"—"Arrah! what for?" was the innocent reply. "Am I to thank her ladyship for driving a troop of dragoons over me?"

The next letter whose seal I broke presented in its address a crabbed piece of penmanship, as Tony Lumpkin would call it, and at once announced that it was a despatch from Major Terence O'Kelly, a gentleman who, through a long and useful life, had never been known to miss a duel or execution within a thirty miles' drive of him. With my first shot he expressed himself particularly satisfied, but he wanted to know why the devil I did not keep up an independent fire through the door, and blow half-a-dozen of the scoundrels into purgatory. Another correspondent remarked, that hitherto he had never placed much faith in old proverbs, but for the future he would be a true believer. In my case, the truth of the adage was in-

stanced past disbelief, and "it was clear that a man born to be hanged would never be drowned." He proceeded to observe, that nothing could be more certain than that the gentleman in black, whose name is never mentioned in the court circular, had marked me for his own; and it was the writer's opinion that I might take a farm in Tipperary—ay, and even ask a tenant for his rent, and not be shot within a fortnight. The other epistles were those of common-place congratulation, and the last and most important bore the seal and superscription of Major General Sir Cæsar O'Sullivan.

My uncle commenced with a sweeping malediction upon the head of "the correspondent of the Carrickbyrne Reporter." His pleasant version of the late affair had obtained general circulation, for Parliament being up, country newspapers were driven to their wit's end, and, like the Drogheda Gazette, to find a paragraph were obliged to drown an interesting child of three years

old, or make a middle-aged man jump into a kiln, with an apology for not giving name and address, as, the body being converted into lime, the marks on the linen were illegible. In the stagnant state of the news-market, our escape from murder and abduction was worth a Jew's eye, and the Carrickbyrne account reached the commander a post before my letter.

And then came the burden of the song. No excuse now—gazetted out—nothing to do—of course, a man must kill time—marriage the only resource—falling out one moment, and falling in the next, would carry a man through the day, though it should be long as the 21st of June. What would have become of him, Sir Cæsar, had Mr. Durneeine qualified me for the coroner? That scoundrel, the lawyer, was blacker in the General's books even than before. A prowling vagabond had been caught in a fox-trap, and his heir presumptive had encouraged the scoundrel to bring an action against Sir Cæsar for damaging

his leg by the employment of illegal implements.

After some more desultory writing about flying gout, and county politics, Sir Caesar came regularly to the scratch. I was reminded of the promise given in London, and also of the expiration allowed for its fulfilment. My uncle graciously intimated further, that he had been, in the interval, on the alert; and, from several female branches of goodly houses, had at last found the lady who would suit me to a T. He had broken ground, and his own terms were favourably met by the opposite commander. It had been further agreed upon that, on neither side, the slightest restraint should be attempted; and the young lady was to remain in perfect ignorance that anything matrimonial was designed against her. We should meet and be introduced as strangers; and if on either side the slightest indisposition to the honourable estate was evinced, the compact between the high contracting parties was to be declared null and

void; and the existence of an intended union should remain a secret between the two functionaries, with whom it had first originated.

The concluding paragraph of the epistle I shall transcribe.—“ Who the devil is this Miss Palmer, for whom you pinked the highwayman? I never was a youthful poet, and can make neither head nor tail of their fancies, or your description. If you had mentioned her height, colour, age, and action, I might have made a guess at what she was. Of one thing I warn you—as she’s an Irishwoman, she has soft solder at command. She’ll throw the line, you’ll swallow the bait; and, when I am in Dublin, I’ll find your flank turned by—another *Mary*.”

Now, although two passages in this wind-up of my uncle’s letter displeased me, namely, that I considered by whatever freedom of the press the editor of the “ Carrickbyrne Reporter” might amplify the killed and wounded, I could see no right by which he changed the name of Harding into Palmer; nor was I

gratified at the General's requiring the same "marks and tokens" of a mistress that he would have given in the "Hue and Cry," when advertising a stolen mare; still I laughed to think how quietly the old commander had let out the secret of his stolen march; and that on his sly arrival in Ireland, as he thought, he would find that he and his brother wise-acre, my father-in-law elect, had wasted much port, and some paper, to little purpose, in framing a treaty to which I would give a *quietus* the moment the *project* was broached.

It was important, however, that my uncle's visit had inadvertently transpired. It would allow me time to try my matrimonial luck before he came, and run the fortunes of Captain O'Sullivan against Sir Cæsar's heir apparent and estates. Of course, the young lady was to be first assailed, and accident gave me the opportunity. Some deed was waiting for Mr. Harding's signature, which required him to repair to a public office; and, left *tête-à-tête* with the old man's

daughter, I commenced the story of my sufferings to "ears attentive."

Although I may say, with Marc Antony, of amorous memory, "I am no orator, as Brutus is," still I fancied that I never could be so superlatively ridiculous, as when I essayed to put the tender interrogatory to Miss Harding. It is true, that though Irish by descent, I had unhappily been brought up at Harrow, and not enjoyed the advantages of an Irish education, which enables the sons of that gem of the sea to offer their hand and fortune (?) to an heiress in the steam-train, and, on a twelve hours' acquaintance in a boarding-house, attempt to carry by assault a widow, though the third time in the market. A few confused sentences on my part confused the lady more. I stammered, she blushed. I took her hand—she murmured something about parental duty, when the door opened; in came Mr. Harding. I stepped to the window, ostensibly to watch the luggage removed from a travelling

carriage; and Miss Harding levanted in the mean time.

It is said, that when a coward is pinned to a corner, he takes courage, and becomes desperate. I presume that, to a similar cause, I may refer my succeeding audacity. Strange, that though to the pretty girl I stammered, as a schoolboy recites an imperfect lesson, to him on whom my fortunes hung I felt a sort of fearless independence, with which no nervous feeling interfered.

After some desultory remarks, I commenced the offensive.

“ Pardon me, Mr. Harding ; I am about to make a trespass, equally on your time and on your kindness.”

“ No pardon, Captain O'Sullivan, from you could be required for either. But for your most disinterested gallantry, the ear that listens would hear mortal sounds no longer. Proceed.”

“ You over-estimate my poor services.”

“ Oh, no. Change the term, Captain, and

say I underrate them. My life preserved—is that a mean boon? My daughter saved from outrage worse than death.—Could mortal obligation surpass either of these two?”

“ I am already sufficiently rewarded, Mr. Harding, in having been the humble agent in arresting the villanous designs of the felons, and holding them in check until more efficient assistance came to the rescue. The first favour I am about to ask, is a patient hearing.”

“ Courtesy, even to a stranger, would command that—I am all attention, Captain.”

“ Think not, Mr. Harding, that I rest the slightest claim upon your kindness on the accidental service, which even a savage would have rendered, when beauty and helplessness called upon him for protection; or that a knowledge of your position in the world has influenced my feelings to the remotest degree. You are wealthy, I am poor; and yet I have rashly dared to aspire to a hand, which dif-

ference in our respective fortunes may have placed beyond my reach. I love—”

A dead pause followed—for I remarked that the rapidity with which I hurried to the point had a striking effect on Mr. Harding; and that his countenance by turns grew pale and red. He bowed for me to proceed, and I determined to make the plunge at once.

“I have nothing to urge that could speed my suit, or extenuate the boldness with which I have ventured to address Miss Harding.”

The old gentleman started.

“She has told me that her feelings are dependant upon her duty; and that without a father’s sanction, she dared not dream of love.”

Confused before, the fox-hunting style, “short, sharp, and decisive,” with which I brought my speech to a close, left Mr. Harding no time to return anything but a direct reply. In the pale face and trembling lips of the father of my lady-love, I read the ruin of my

hopes—the downfall of my edifice of paste-board. But, upon my soul! like the parting kick of a horse who has thrown its rider, I had no idea of the final blow that was to crush me. The soldier of fortune had made a bold advance, with the heir of Sir Cæsar O'Sullivan to fall back upon as a reserve; but, as Mrs. Malaprop pleasantly expresses it, had he been like Cerberus, three gentlemen in one, upon his triplicate humanity Mr. Harding would have placed a regular extinguisher.

“ Captain O'Sullivan,” he said—and the tremulous tone of voice in which his answer was returned spoke the inward agitation of the old gentleman. “ The two most painful incidents of a life, hitherto undisturbed with any painful occurrences, save those ‘ the flesh is heir to,’ appear to have been reserved for my short and unhappy visit to this island. The first you know and can understand; with the second, you must partially

remain in ignorance, and therefore cannot estimate the causes, although you may guess the pain with which I tell you, that I must reject your suit."

I don't exactly know how I looked, but I felt that a shell falling into the apartment would have given a pleasant change to the current of my thoughts.

"An impassable barrier exists. My daughter's hand is destined for another."

Here was a comfortable disclosure! I had fallen desperately in love with a bride elect, and probably, when I intimated to the old gentleman that I had a favour to solicit, he took it for granted that it would be to ask an invitation to his daughter's wedding. The change of countenance, no doubt similar to that with which the criminal hears that for him all hope is over, told Mr. Harding how withering was the rejection of my suit—and that he felt bitterly the pain necessity had obliged him to inflict, the deep sympathy his

face expressed, and a tear which stole down his cheek, and was hastily brushed away, most faithfully assured me.

“ Good God !” he said. “ How exquisitely agonizing that the only boon I could have denied him who saved me, was the one he should prefer ! Captain, think well—is there naught beside by which I may prove my gratitude ? Name it—demand it—it is granted before the words escape your lips !” The old man took my hand in his. “ Tax my gratitude—ay, to the uttermost, and fear no second refusal.”

I shook my head.

“ I thank you, Mr. Harding. I have nothing upon earth to wish for, or care for now.”

It was the most painful moment of a painful scene ; but, fortunately, the waiter at the moment entered the apartment with a double packet of letters. The English mail had just come in, and for both Mr. Harding and myself there were several despatches. These

afforded me a plea for retiring to my room; and, no doubt, Mr. Harding felt equal relief in ending an interview, that it would be hard to decide which party had found the most distressing.

Two or three common-place letters I had lightly looked over, but the last occasioned no small astonishment when I perused its contents. The letter was official, and from Greenwood and Cox, to announce that the regulated price to purchase a majority had been lodged for that purpose by a London solicitor, and that the same was duly placed to my credit. What, in the name of mystery, did this mean? I looked at the letter a second time. There was no mistake in the matter—there was no other captain so designated in the army list, and I was consequently the real Simon Pure. But whence came the money? Save mine honoured uncle, there was no one who could or would lodge two thousand pounds for me; and Sir Cæsar was not only solicitous that I should quit the service, but knew that I was

actually gazetted out, and no longer on the strength of the army. It was a riddle I could not read, and, of course, it had to remain so.

Really and absolutely wretched, I knew not where to fly and leave uneasy thoughts behind. Restless as another Cain, I paced my chamber for an hour, and then, purely because I did not know what else to do, I seized my hat and cane, and determined to make a sally on the world. But another, and even a more painful scene awaited me.

I had descended the stairs, and on the first landing-place to which the door of her chamber opened, I encountered Miss Harding. I remarked how pale her cheeks were, and I felt the flush which reddened mine. Not to accompany her to the drawing-room would have been rudeness, and we entered the apartment together. Both laboured under deep embarrassment; she seated herself on a sofa, and I placed myself beside her. For a minute a dead silence prevailed, and the lady broke it, by timidly inquiring had the English post

come in? Simple as the question was, it stung me to the soul. Whence Mary's anxiety for letters? No doubt a billet from her future lord was expected—from him, who had rivalled me in her affections, and robbed me of her heart.

“ Yes, Miss Harding. The letters are delivered, and one which I have received calls me away to-morrow.”

“ To-morrow !” she half exclaimed ; “ and are we to lose you so soon, Captain? I thought you would have remained with us during our sojourn in the capital.”

“ Such was my intention—but”

“ Why alter it?” she inquired quickly; then, as a blush suffused her cheek, she added, “ Forgive me, I have been guilty of a rudeness. It was, however, unintentional.”

The eyes of love are searching. There was something in Mary's manner which spoke more than words. I looked at her steadily.

“ My absence will not be felt, Mary. You will soon have another arm to rest on.”

She turned her eyes, in innocent astonishment, on mine.

“ Another arm to rest on ? ” she said, in an inquiring voice. “ What does my friend mean ? ”

“ That the friend will be succeeded by the lover.”

I watched her countenance. It expressed curiosity and surprise.

“ In plain English, Mary, your lord elect—your destined husband.”

“ My destined husband ? Ah, Captain, you jest with me. I have no destined husband.”

“ Heavens ! Mary—dear Mary—do I hear aright ? Are not your affections bestowed upon another—your hand affianced—your heart engaged ? ”

“ Heart engaged, Captain ? Until to-day none ever sought it.”

“ Mary—beloved Mary—speak one word to him who would give worlds could he win thee. Did my mad and ambitious declaration pain you ? Have I offended past forgiveness ?

If I have trespassed—say that you are not angry, and I, forgiven.”

I had knelt at her feet, her hand was clasped in mine, and, as I covered it with kisses, in her half-averted look there was no displeasure, and the long lashes of her soft and gentle eyes were wet with tears.

“ Mary!” I said; “ ’tis the last time I may ever be allowed to speak the words of love. Here—on my knees, and in the sight of Heaven—come weal, come woe—the heart I tender to you shall never own another passion. Will you accept it?”

The word was trembling on her lips. I read the answer in her eye. “ Yes!” was feebly murmured, and next moment I had sprung upon my feet, clasped her to my heart, and the first kiss of love was given. That moment of happiness, felt once within a life, was suddenly interrupted—a hand gently parted us—Mary screamed and sank upon the sofa—and, in a voice more in sorrow than in anger, Mr. Harding asked, “ After what has passed,

is this conduct on your part generous, Captain?"

I made no reply, caught my hat up, threw a parting glance at Mary, rushed down the stairs, and, with a brain on fire, hurried along at random, neither knowing nor caring whither I went.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I AM INDUCED BY CAPTAIN CALLAGHAN TO TAKE PLEASURE, AND VISIT DONNYBROOK FAIR — AN IRISH RESTAURANT FRANCAISE—WIND-UP TO A SPOLEEINE DINNER—MATRIMONY.

Whoe'er has the luck to see Donnybrook Fair,
 An Irishman all in his glory is there,
 With his sprig of shillelagh and shamrock so green.
Old Ballad.

Married—by everything conjugal!
She Stoops to Conquer.

I never felt myself before in a frame of mind so exquisitely distressing. What, under happier circumstances, would have proved a rapturous discovery—the conviction that Mary Harding returned my love—now added to the unexpected disappointment I had sustained by her father's rejection of my suit; while newborn jealousy and wounded pride lent their

able assistance to complete my wretchedness. In building my house of cards, I felt assured that, if the soldier of fortune wooed in vain, the heir of Sir Cæsar's title and estates would not claim the lady's hand and be refused the boon he sought—*sed, dis alitur*—the Fates arrayed themselves against me; and while other men's course of love might not exactly run smooth, mine was regularly "tempest-tost."

There are times, it is said by learned Thebans, when men are in happy mood for the gentleman in black to open an account with—I will not assert that I was precisely "i' th' vein" to have gone the whole hog with his satanic majesty; but, as it may appear, I did not turn a deaf ear to the overtures of one of his faithful disciples.

I had crossed Carlisle Bridge, when a personage, struck by my appearance, stopped suddenly, and communed with his own thoughts, sufficiently loud to enable me to overhear the concluding sentence of the soliloquy.

“ Arrah ! then, as sure as my name’s Peter Callaghan, it’s himself !”

I started and turned round—and there, large as life, my excellent friend, the gallant Captain, was standing. When I presented a full front, every doubt regarding my identity vanished; and having secured my hand in a grip something between the pressure of a smith’s vice and the embrace of a boa-constrictor, Peter tenderly inquired—“ Whether it was myself or my ghost ?” It being contrary to every rule laid down in Demonology for spectres to be seen on Carlisle Bridge by daylight, I assured Captain Callaghan that I was in the flesh still.

“ Arrah ! darline, if yer not in a particklar hurry, just slither in with me to the Carlingford for five minutes, ’till I sweep a cobweb out of my throat with a glass of Guinness. And how is every inch of ye ? So ye have the fin in a handkerchief ?” — thereby meaning my wounded arm in a scarf—“ Arrah !” wasn’t I proud of ye, Ned, when I heard ye

had drilled a hole in that spalpeen—curse a God upon him, the thief!—through which you could read an advertisement in Saunders; says I, by all that's beautiful! I knew he was just the lad who would make a spoon, or spoil a horn!"

The conclusion of this pleasant speech brought us to the door of "the Carlingford," a pleasant establishment on Aston's Quay, where (olim) oysters were nightly demolished by the thousand, and black eyes very liberally interchanged. Captain Callaghan was received with that smiling attention, which a valued guest is certain to command; and before he had time to bless himself, a foaming tankard of treble X was placed in his hand by the obsequious pantler.

"Garsoon!" — Peter had been a week in Boulogne, and, consequently, spoke French like a native—"I say, *boheel bawn!* Do ye know, *avourneene*, if the gentlemen are bailed out yet?"

"Feaks!" returned the "fair boy," if a

half-washed sweep, with one shoulder highly elevated above its fellow, and eyes evidently at cross-purposes, were entitled to that endearing epithet, "I did not hear, Captain." Then, approaching more closely to his respected patron, throwing a back look over his shoulder, and lowering his voice to a half-whisper, the potboy added, "There has been bloody murder about the lookin'-glass!"

"What lookin'-glass?" inquired Mr. Callaghan, with an air of innocence which insinuated that he was no *particeps criminis*.

"Arrah! The glass up stairs, yer honour, druv the gintleman through. I took my oath to the mistriss, that the North man made *smithereens* of it wid the tongs—and the creature was so drunk, that he can't deny it. They have been after him to three watch-houses—and wherever the divil he has stuck himself, sorra one of him they can make out. Yer honour's safe. Amn't I better to ye than a bad step-father?"

"Troth, Corney jewel," returned the com-

mander, "ye'll give the sheriff trouble some beautiful morning, and die like Larry O'Brien 'with your face to the city.' That's for the Guinness — and there's a shilling to yourself, for plastering the looking-glass on the North man. Come along, Ned; we'll toddle down to the Cock, in Mary Street. May be, the gentlemen are there."

Then, delivering a long and lucid message to Corney aforesaid, stating that he, Captain Callaghan, if not found, if sought for at "the Cock," would be certainly forthcoming at "the Strugglers," we set out for the former *restaurant*, in which, if Peter could be credited, the best steak ever a Christian clapped a coal under, might be had at the notice of five minutes.

"I presume, Peter, you intend to patronize the Cock, and put the gridiron in requisition?"

"No, not to-day," returned the gallant Captain; "I'm going with a few friends to have a *spoleeine* at Donnybrook; and in troth, Harry, my heart's sore when I think of it."

The last time I was there, Charley Ormsby was of the party—oh, murder! how pleasant we were! There was, to be sure, a bit of a ruction in the evening—for one of them divils from the College let fly a pewter pot, and, instead of hitting the landlord, he took a tooth out of poor Charley!”

“Is your lamented friend long defunct?”

“It’s better than a twelvemonth since they sodded him,” returned Peter with a sigh.

“And what killed him, Peter?”

“Oh, bad luck attend it! Soda-water!” responded Captain Callaghan.

“Nonsense, Peter! soda-water never killed anybody.”

“Oh! ye see it’s if you take too much of it—that’s where the mischief lies. You know that no man in his senses would poison himself with a villanous combustible of that kind, unless there was a sketch of brandy in the bottom, to take the colour of death off the water. Poor Charley would have three or four bottles to his bed-side, before he could

lift his head off the flea-bag; and, if the doctors could be believed, the soda-water finished him at last!"

This obituary notice, touching the false lover of Penelope Winterton, brought us to the Cock; and Peter's eyes were blessed by the appearance of three of his valued friends to whom I was individually presented. Two of the gentlemen were playing dominoes, and the third was sitting to an artist.

If the reader fancies that Mr. Theobald O'Driscoll was employed in having his lineaments transferred either to ivory or canvass, he will be sadly mistaken. The truth is, that Toby had been at the symposium held the preceding night at the Carlingford; had got into trouble first, and the watch-house afterwards, and, being booked for the dinner-party at Donnybrook, he did not wish to join "the gay fantastic throng" assembled at that fashionable and festive scene, until a dark-coloured halo which encircled his dexter optic had been painted out by a very rising

artist, who, however, did not belong to the Royal Academy.

“Arrah! Harry jewel!” whispered Captain Callaghan, in a softened tone that would have wiled a bird off her nest, “may be ye would join the party, and, after a slice of the *spo-leeine*, shake a leg in Murty Currigan’s? Sorra a one of us but will have a pleasant evening. Come, say you will? There’s the boys here—six or eight College chaps—and two English gentlemen, who are come over to find out, if they can, what the divil’s the matter, which makes Dan bellow like a bull, about justice for Ireland. Bad luck to the much information they’le be after getting at Donnybrook, I think.”

Were I to tell the truth, had Peter proposed a short excursion to the Antipodes, or indeed to any place short of Purgatory, I would have embraced himself and the offer. When, however, the operation on Mr. O’Driscoll’s eye had been accomplished, and the waiter was desired to “parade the twigs,” I

confess that, on the production of divers shillelaghs with iron ferules, I would have backed out could I have managed it. But the Rubicon was crossed — I had given a fatal consent— though still I comforted myself with the recollection that, as I was regularly *hors de combat*, I could not consequently be reckoned among the belligerents.

“ Give me my bit of blackthorn,” said the Captain to the waiter, “ and bring a drop of spirits and cold water to rince our mouths for luck before we start ; and Dick, jewel ! be sure you get us a chap that will rowl us like gentlemen to the fair.”

All these orders were obeyed : a carriage was speedily announced to be in waiting. Peter Callaghan and I mounted one side of the *shandredan* ; the gentleman with the painted eye and his two companions took the other ; and away we went.

To describe either an Irish jaunting car, or the Fair of Donnybrook, would be inflicting upon the reader a tale that has been told. It will

be enough to say, that the vehicular appointments were unique, and that, for one passing peep at the driver, I verily believe that George Cruikshank would consent to operate an hour upon the treadmill. Of the company "taking a rowl to the brook," it becometh me not to speak—*pars fui*—and modesty insinuates that I should be silent. To claim anything like an equality with a group so *distingue* as that which filled the car would, on my part, be overweening vanity—and I admit that I looked like a person wanting in "proper spirit," and who would slip round a corner to avoid a row—while on the contrary, the very air of my friends would have been a sufficient warrantry for a police magistrate to have bound them over for the term of their natural lives to keep the peace to all his Majesty's subjects. Indeed, in one short summary be it told, that four looser-looking lads never bundled to "the Brook" on the outside of an Irish jaunting car, than my friends and loving countrymen.

On reaching the entrance to the festive scene, we dismounted from "the bone-setter," as Mick Doolan termed his carriage. An itinerant merchant had here fixed his establishment, and "cheap Jack" was in full swing, impressing on an admiring auditory the necessity of taking fortune at the flood, and securing the valuable property he was then about to sacrifice. The affecting circumstances under which this invaluable stock was "submitted to public competition" were feelingly detailed—the unhappy proprietor being at the very moment "confined in the back bars of Newgate, laid upon a wisp of straw, handcuffed and double-bolted, and all for the want of ready money." "Step forward, ladies and gentlemen," continued Cheap Jack, "and I'll tell ye more than the clargy will. They say that there's ten commandments, but I'll give ye the eleventh—and that's 'take care of yerselves.' But ye won't want that in daling honourably with me; for a two-year ould child would get on as well as his grand-

father. I never could hould my own with the world; I was born a fool; and, before she dare trust me out of her sight, my mother had me cut for the simples. Step forward, young man; you look like a raal patriarch. Here's the identicle patern of the handkerchief with which Dan O'Connell wiped his face, after delivering a speech three hours long, that confined the lady lieutenant to her bed, and threw the Lord Mayor into hysterics."

"If it's the same quality of the one ye sould me," observed a gentleman in the crowd, "it will become finer every day; and, after the first washing, ye may riddle bulldogs through it if ye plase."

This bold hit at Cheap Jack elicited a hearty laugh from the crowd, but the itinerant dealer in soft wares was ever ready for hard returns.

"Arrah! how are ye, Tom? Good air, they say's a blessin; and what a healthy place Kilmainham must be! Troth! I'm

glad to see ye! I knew yer mother well—and the same be token I remember ye made a beautiful hole in a bowl of stirabout, the night that she was married.”

The laugh recoiled upon the assailant; but Jack, who had other fish to fry, desisted from further hostilities, to employ his oratory to more profitable purposes.

“Would ye be plased to make way for the young lady with the pink parasol. It’s asy to see, miss, that ye stand upon conservative principles. Take that morsel of muslin into yer beautiful fist;” and he shot over a tawdry pocket-handkerchief to the blushing girl. “It’s strong enough to haltar an elephant, and the orange and blue are drove into the cloth by a steam-engine and the force of fire. That’s what I call a regular ‘no surrender.’ The pattern was drawn by the Queen of Bohemia, in honour of the great King William; and you might trail it after a ship from the Cove of Cork to the

rock of Giberaltar, and the colours would stand the trial."

Mr. O'Driscol, who had already evinced some impatience at listening to Cheap Jack, now hinted that the party might be collected at Murty Currigan's—and, pushing through the crowd, we entered a street formed of booths, ranged side by side, and found Donnybrook in all its pristine glory.

Mr. Currigan's establishment was erected in the centre of the fair, and I suppose, to ensure the safety of the guests, it was placed under the direct patronage of Saint Patrick. An effigy of that blessed personage was suspended from a pole; and, had the calendar been searched through, he, "surnamed the morning star," had not a more formidable antagonist. The expression of the saint's features was stern and determined, as if he were warning Satan off the premises, and intimating to the arch enemy of man, that he, Patrick, would "stand no gammon." The

painter had been liberal also, in fitting out his man for war, had the devil ventured to try conclusions. The beard would have put a rabbi's to the blush—the crosier was a load for a grenadier—and the pontifical superstructure that crowned the whole was on a scale of magnificence which not a gentleman on the blessed bead-roll could pretend to emulate.

Beneath the saint's physiognomy and accoutrements, a board was affixed to the pole, which contained much useful information for travellers in general.

“ MURTAGH CURRIGAN,

*From the Cat and Bagpipes, Hell Street,
Mud Island.*

Restaurateur Français to Trinity College,

AND

Purveyor-general to the army at large.

Music provided, dinners as bespoke, genteel apartments at the hotel in town, and every luxury to be had at the fair.”

To this general and modest announcement,

Mr. Currigan had annexed a tariff of his prices, and the visitor was thus enabled to ascertain from Murty's *carte*, the precise draft that would be made upon his pocket, whether he indulged in a *spoleeine*¹ at the *table d'hôte*, or took a passing *cropper*² at the counter.

Before the entrance of Murty's *restaurant*, which appeared to be a sort of cave of interminable length, formed by rick-cloths and the bed-coverings of the Mud Island hotel, extended over wattles stuck in the ground below, and arched together above, half-a-dozen of his customers were standing. I thought that my travelling companions were of that Milesian order termed "broths of boys," and consequently not to be surpassed; but the *roué* detachment of "loose lads" which joined and completed the dinner-party, were in every respect their fellows. Not one of these, the alumni of the Irish university, appeared to have attained his

¹ *Anglice*—a collop of boiled mutton.

² A dram of whisky, *nate*.

majority. All had that stamp of birth and fashion, curiously amalgamated with a devil-may-care rakishness, that would enable a sand-blind traveller to pick out a collegeman in a crowd. They too were ready for war, for each had a *boulteeine*¹ of the most approved proportions, and a hat whose superior surface bore the imprint of a watchman's pole, or which some pleasant gentleman had sate upon for half an hour at the Carlingford. Hearty was the greeting that passed between the united belligerents; and, useless devil as I was, when it was intimated by Captain Callaghan that I had recently committed homicide, I was received with a deferential respect by "the lads" that would more than repay, at any time, an arraignment for manslaughter.

After the introductory ceremonial had been duly performed, we entered the orifice of Murty's cavern, which, on one side, was flanked by a barrel of beer, and on the other

Boulteeine—Anglice, a cudgel.

by two huge iron pots, suspended in gipsy fashion from strong stakes, set in the ground, and united at the top. The greater cauldron was surcharged with potatoes, the lesser with mutton collops, and both were under the direction of a female *cuisinière*. This Leonora of Mud Island, whose services had been placed in requisition for the fair, was a stout amazon with bare legs and red arms. Provided with a formidable iron implement, when a *spoleeine* was required by a customer, she struck her trident in a collop, and landed it on a plate held for that purpose, by a living scarecrow, called the waiter. As she was constantly on duty, the day hot, and in front and rear exposed to a couple of fires, which would have cooked a cannibal whole without requiring his being quartered and jointed, repeated visits to the adjacent beer-barrel were excusable. In her, nature had no reason to complain that art had injured her proportions; and, had Tom Moore honoured the *restaurateur française* of Trinity College

with his presence, he would have admitted that, unlike his "Lesbia of the beaming eye," Biddy Donovan was not overlaced.

"Step in, gentlemen, to the royal hotel!" exclaimed Mr. Currigan. "Wisp the pratty skins off the cloth, and lay clane mugs for their honours." Most ceremoniously the first collegeman, who had never been yet so fortunate as to kill a man, admitted superior dessert on my part, and gave me precedency. By bending nearly double, I introduced my person beneath a torn sack, which hung over the doorway of Murty's den, and formed an unpretending drapery to the entrance; and, making my way down the wattled alley to secure my wounded arm from accidental collisions, I took the flank-end of the board. The remainder of the company ducked and followed the example, until Murty's voice from without announced "the table's full"—by exclaiming, after reckoning his customers as they passed him, "Mutton and praties for fourteen. Stir yerself, Biddy Donovan!"

The description of two of the company I have hitherto omitted ; and these were the English philanthropists, who had come specially to Ireland to investigate the extent of her wrongs. Never were two itinerant patriots thrown into a more ill-assorted assemblage ; and if their errand was to heal national wounds, they were at present in a locality where the reception of personal ones was a much more probable event. Their external appearance differed from that of the remainder of the company ; for, in sooth, they were two slight, sandy-haired, simple-looking gentlemen as ever made a *début* at Donnybrook. Their interests no doubt were charitable ; for neither blackthorn nor saplin ornamented their right hands—while oil-cased umbrellas plainly intimated, that they were men of peace as well as political reformers.

A slight incident in entering Murty's pavilion might have been looked upon by one of these philosophers as being ominous. In passing the Nora Creena, who presided over

the culinary department of Mr. Currigan's *restaurant*, one of the college men favoured the lady with a poke of his stick. Assailed in the rear, Miss Donovan, on turning round to repel aggression, from the peculiar position in which the Saxon visiter carried his umbrella, unhappily considered him the offender, and resented the assault by a full stoccado of her flesh-fork. Engaged in admiring the portrait of Saint Patrick, great was the sufferer's astonishment at finding the most unprotected portion of his person very painfully assailed. Remonstrance was not permitted; for, in a fine burst of classic eloquence, Miss Donovan consigned him to another and a warmer world, and with a flourish of the trident indicated an intention on her part to renew hostilities. The philosopher did not abide the issue, but jumped into the booth for protection; and, to judge by the uneasiness his countenance betrayed, as he took his place at the festive board, although a poke from a blackthorn may inflict a wound upon the honour, still, for

leaving a lasting impression, there's nothing like a flesh-fork, after all.

The *spoleeines* were discussed : a couple of jugs of hot punch, fabricated by Murty with skill and care, succeeded the mutton ; a fiddler, seated on an inverted keg, was playing a pleasant jig in the further end of the pavilion, and sundry devotees of Terpsichore were actively at work. An unusual calm hung over Donnybrook ; the goddess of discord appeared to have left the fair for the evening ; no clattering of cudgels announced that the boys had gone to work ; no innocent observation of " who dare say paas !" gave " note of preparation." Separated only by the drapery of blanket or counterpane from the adjacent booths, we sat *dos-à-dos* to the ladies and gentlemen who favoured both with their company ; and so close was the union of the rival establishments, that back supported back, and, from the indentations of skulls in the canvass, you could have easily ascertained the precise extent of the visitors on either

side. Apollo presided over the left-hand pavilion, for in it an agreeable personage was warbling the "Groves of Blarney;" while on the right, it was quite evident that "love will be the lord of all"—a soft voice, tenderly requesting "to be left alone," was responded to with "Arrah! Judy, my tulip, before I swallow another Johnny, I'll take the flavour off yer lips." The blanket partition was indented by a brace of skulls, and a smack, like the snap of a copper cap, told that the kiss was consummated.

One of the Bradburn *savans* having coughed to attract general attention, was pleased to remark, that he had come under an impression that the Irish had been misrepresented, and that impression was confirmed—that for centuries they had been oppressed, abused, insulted—and he believed sincerely that the Saxon yoke was worse than the Egyptian, of that, too, he felt assured. Justice for Ireland was imperiously demanded; and he pledged himself that the book he should pub-

lish, on his return to England, the title of which was still undecided, should speak trumpet-tongued the wrongs of injured Erin; and, as he was vain enough to imagine, call the attention of King, Lords, and Commons, to devise a remedy for her wrongs. On one point he must speak, and he must add, indignantly. The very place he now had visited with such pleasure, that place had been infamously libelled. In their ignorance of Ireland, too many of his credulous countrymen had erroneously supposed that Donnybrook was insecure; and men were there assaulted and knocked down for any reason, and sometimes for no reason at all. On this point, he also would enlighten his besotted fellow-citizens. What could be more delightful than their present meeting? Love and song at either side. A happy thought, by the way—Mr. Jenkins, I'll trouble you to book it."

His companion, we now discovered, was only secretary to the philanthropist; for, pro-

ducing a Chubb-locked diary, he proceeded to record Mr. Robinson's remarks. From the top of the table, Captain Callaghan winked to the College man, who divided me from the man of Bradburn, and that wink was correctly understood.

"Captain O'Sullivan," whispered the young *roué*, "you're not in fighting order, so stroll down among the dancers. Behind the fiddler, the curtain lifts: when the *rookawn* commences, pop out instantly, and within a couple of minutes, you'll see as beautiful a *shindy* as Donnybrook will show during the meeting. You see the entry in that ass's day-book, which the other fool is making? If it be not altered before he goes to bed—that is, if Mr. Robinson is able to reach it—don't believe Harry Ponsonby again."

Never was pledge given more speedily redeemed. At the moment when Mr. Jenkins was noticing Mr. Robinson's remarks, the *dos-à-dos* of the latter gentleman had reached that affecting part of the ballad, where the

Lady Jeffrys had just reason to complain of Saxon cruelty, inasmuch as

“ Oliver Cromwell,
He did her pummel,
And made a breach in her battlement.”

Fortunate was it for me, that I had taken a flank position ; and, rising from the bench, I stepped along the booth until I reached the keg on which the fiddler was seated. I turned my eye carelessly on Mr. Ponsonby, and observed him quietly remove a fork from the table, and, unnoticed by the remainder of the company, jerk it through the blanket which separated the man of Bradburn from the man of song in the next pavilion. I believe there is a movement in the art of melody, termed a musical transition ; and, never was there a more marked one, than that with which the quaver of our next door neighbour was exchanged for a yell of agony.—“ Oh, blessed Antony !” he shouted, “ I’m fairly murdered ;” and, springing from the form upon which he had been so unexpectedly assaulted, a crash of crockery an-

nounced that he had jumped upon the table. Scarcely had the prongs been inserted into the nether portion of the person of the vocalist, until Mr. Ponsonby had thrown himself flat upon the floor. The head of Mr. Robinson, which was thrown back in a fine attitude of repose, did not escape the notice of the sufferer—and considering that he was indebted to the philanthropist for the favour he had received, he returned the compliment on the skull of the suspected assailant with a good will, that sent Mr. Robinson to the floor like a sack of sawdust. Dire was the uproar that succeeded, as from either pavilion the company issued out and commenced a general *melée*. One mischievous Collegeman gripped the table-cloth as he sallied into action, and the appurtenances thereof became instantly a heap of ruin—while the gentleman with the painted eye struck away one of the supporters of the spoleeine-pot—and in a vain attempt to preserve the equilibrium of that vessel, over which she presided with so much credit, Miss

Donovan received a considerable portion of its contents. Hopping upon one foot, Biddy showed a marked antipathy to scalding water ; and all, a Tyrian or Trojan, whose persons came within her reach, were favoured with a touch of her trident, and that, too, without the slightest partiality. From small causes spring great events. Every tent, when the *cri de guerre* was heard, poured out its quota of belligerents ; and, through the ingenuity of Mr. Ponsonby, and the judicious application of a dinner-fork, in five minutes after, one hundred couple of its visitors were in full occupation upon the green of Donnybrook. As for me, I watched the battle at a distance ; and, as the tide of conflict rolled from the place where hostilities had broken out, I determined to retire, unscathed, from the seat of war. On passing Murty's establishment, I perceived the unfortunate *restaurateur* lamenting over the demolition of his property, while Miss Donovan was hopping about on one foot, collecting the few fragments of the

mutton, of which the greater portion had been rapidly abtracted by numerous idlers, who had not been engaged in the row.

I stepped into the pavilion. Secretary Jenkins was binding a handkerchief round his patron's head; and I innocently inquired the extent to which his cranium had been damaged, and whether he could inform me what the deuce had produced the battle, which was still raging out of doors. A melancholy shake of the head announced the ignorance of the philanthropist, as to the causes which had rendered him *hors de combat*; but Murty Carrigan was more communicative.

“Arrah, Captain, jewel—the divil that knows everything—Lord pardon us for mentionin his name!—only can tell that. There they were, as paceable as lambs this minute, and the next nothing but bloody murder. Whatever brought the *rookawn* on, amn't I fairly ruinated? Jugs, mugs, and bottles all in *smithereens* on the floor—Biddy hoppin on one leg like a magpie—and not three

scraps remaining out of a side of mutton. May the widow's curse light upon ye, Toby Dricol!—Af I don't have ye to the court o'conscience next Monday mornin for assault and battery on Biddy Donovan, and destruction of property, by tumblin the spoleeine-pot. Oh! murder! here's myself clane broke and reduced to desolation, and nobody can tell how—Oh! murder! murder!"

The jeramiade was interrupted by an exclamation from without.

"Oh! Father Antony, look down upon us! Arrah! Mister Carrigan, jewel! will ye jist step out?" and both guest and landlord, meaning thereby Murty and myself, obeyed the summons of Miss Donovan, whose high excitement, and singular evolutions executed upon a single leg, gave her the air and appearance of a mad Bacchante.

"Here — there, fightin back — May the Lord protect us!—There goes the Paphian Bower! every wattle tore away for *boul-teeines* to murder one another! and as Biddy

spoke, a goodly pavilion which bore that insinuating title, vanished as if Harlequin had given it a signal to disappear, and, 'left not a wreck behind.' Oh murder! Down goes the Temple of Fortune;" and fifty couple of well-matched combatants went, in one grand passage of arms, clean through the centre of an edifice, which five minutes before was doing an extensive and profitable business.

The maimed and wounded began now to drop out of the *mêlée*, and retire to the rear; generally the damage sustained was confined to the skull and countenance; but, from the position of his hand, a stout gentleman near the tent had received lethal injury much nearer to the centre of gravity than either the head or feet. I rather suspected who the sufferer was, and ventured a tender inquiry.

"Am I hurt?" responded the wounded man, answering my question in the Irish style, by addressing an interrogatory to me in return. "Arrah! do you suppose a body can

get two inches of a three pronged fork drove into him through an ould blanket without feeling it?"

Mr. Robinson, who had managed, with the assistance of Mr. Jenkins, to approach the entrance of the ruins of Murty's *restaurant*, witnessed the downfall of "the Temple of Fortune," for a few moments, and in speechless astonishment, silently gazed upon the battle, as the cries of the combatants and the clattering of cudgels "now trebly thundering swell'd the gale." What the current of his thoughts might have been, or what philosophic inferences he drew from passing events, I am not prepared to say, as a voice at my elbow ejaculated—

"Isn't that beautiful slating, yer honours? 'The timple's' teetotally demolished — and Holy Paul! down goes 'the Rookery!'"

As Mick Doolan—for it was the gentleman who "rowled us to the brook" that directed our attention to the progress of the battle—ended his brief remark, as Shakspeare

saith, "a cry of women," and the magical disappearance of another fashionable establishment, too fatally confirmed the truth of Mickey's prediction; and "the Rookery" was no more. Mr. Robinson, whose intellects seemed slightly obnubilated, since the temper of a twig of crab-tree had been satisfactorily tested by a direct application to the posterior region of his knowledge-box, at last gave vent to his "impressions of Ireland and the Irish."

"I have read," he half said and half soliloquized, "of Cattabaws and Cherokees—I am acquainted with Cannibals and Anthropophagi through books; but of all the savage nations upon earth, I give the palm to Ireland."

"Is Mr. Jenkins to book that observation?" I inquired.

Before he could reply, "the war, that for a time did fail," received a fresh and exciting impulse, by the fortunate arrival of a couple of jaunting cars, loaded with college men and citizens, who instantly, and without losing time by an inquiry, took part in the affray:

To a supplication from the Bradburn reformer that I would save his life, I willingly assented. Mick Doolan piloted us to his "bone-setter;" and when the pleasure of the evening was but commencing, we stupidly abandoned the scene of love and song.

"Do you purpose taking a *spolieene* at the Brook to-morrow?" I cursorily inquired of Mr. Robinson.

The philosopher looked at me for a moment. "When I commit suicide, sir," he solemnly responded, "I will jump into the crater of Vesuvius—my death will be more classic, and my sufferings be shorter."

"But you have got merely a bird's-eye glimpse at Irish life."

"I have got as much knowledge of national character and habits as I want to have; and should I be out of the surgeon's hands to-morrow afternoon, if you inquire at the office of his Majesty's mail packet, among the earliest berths secured for Liverpool, you will find one booked for—*Mr. Anastatius Robinson.*"

On my return to Bilton's, I had stolen up stairs to my own chamber, and avoided the drawing-room. Indeed, the position I was placed in with Mr. Harding was one of painful embarrassment. The racket of Donnybrook had partially abstracted my thoughts; but now, like the sobriety which follows drunkenness, the revulsion was distressing. I loved "wisely and too well"—my passion was returned—my homage was accepted—when up rose a gigantic obstacle to crush my hopes at once. Hopeless, indeed, I was; for I had seen enough of Mr. Harding's character, to know that with him a pledge was sacred; and that no matter how feelings and honour might come in conflict, with the latter undoubtedly the victory would remain. What should be my course of action? Should I endeavour to alienate from him for whom it was destined, a heart over which the recollection of accidental services had given me some advantage? Were Mary Harding's sentiments towards me those of gratitude or

love? and should I, at the sacrifice of filial obedience, endeavour to make her mine? Love said, "*En avant*, Captain!" but Honour whispered "Halt!"

My mind was regularly tempest-tost. I paced the room—now determining to enact "Plato the sententious," and fly from the perilous struggle which passion opposed to principle entails on him who is hardy enough to essay the trial: then, by rapid transition, throwing philosophy to the dogs, I resolved that in love as well as war, to obtain success, the end justified the means. The self-denial of the Romish School was beautiful in theory; but the happy adaptation of Irish optimism was pleasant in practice; and the conclusion I came to was, to run away with Mary first, and, on our return from Gretna green, balance the account between love and duty on the road, before we asked her father's blessing.

Heaven pardon me! to this conclusion had I come, when a gentle tap at the door startled me. My loud and rather angry "Come in!"

was promptly obeyed! and Mary Hamblyn presented herself. She was the bearer of a sealed billet—I broke the cover—rapidly ran my eye over the letter — and I need scarcely add that to my intended expedition to the border it was a regular demolisher.

And yet, though my hopes were finally extinguished, the perusal of Mary's farewell epistle was calculated to create a melancholy pleasure; for, while she assured me that she never would disobey her father, or form a union without his sanction hallowed it, she ingenuously owned that she loved me, and never would wed another. Mary Hamblyn, who had watched the varying expression of my countenance, as I read the valediction of the gentle girl, was about, I presume, to offer me sympathy and counsel, when a heavy tread crossed the lobby. "This way, sir," exclaimed the waiter; and after "a loud alarm" of his knuckles on the door, it opened, and in came Captain Callaghan.

"My dear boy..." commenced Peter, when I glance at Miss Harding's pretty messenger

changed the current of his thoughts. "The Lord bless your pretty face!—Maybe you would let me light a cigar at your eye? as the dragoon said to the duchess."

Mary Hamblyn, having declined the experiment, and retired, the Captain thus continued.

"Arrah! what a pity it was that your fin was out of order, and you couldn't take share in the *rookawn*.—Divil a one of me ever was present at a prettier slating match! We cleared the fair from end to end—and finished the fight, by tattering down the Theatre Royal. Lord! but ye would have laughed; if ye had seen Hamlet's Ghost scrambling out of the ruins, with a young woman they call Ophalia. But there will be the devil to pay next Friday, at the Court of Conscience. Seven booths teetotally destroyed; and if ye riddled Donnybrook, ye wouldn't find a whole tumbler. Faith! 'I'll cut my lucky' before the law begins; and the fortnight poor dear Mrs. Callaghan gave me to visit the family in

Cork, was out last Monday. Divil a step farther than Dublin I could get for the life of me. One meets, ye know, with so many ould acquaintance."

"But, Peter, won't the family be disappointed at not seeing a member they have so much reason to be proud of?"

"I don't doubt but they will; but I wrote what they call a circular letter to my uncle Cornelius, and tould Corney to read it to the remainder of the family.—Come in, if you're fat!" continued Peter, in reply to a knock at the door. The order was obeyed, and the valet and privy counsellor of my honoured uncle duly presented himself. Sir Cæsar, "good easy man," as he fancied, had executed his stolen march—and the ex-commander had been actually located in Bilton's, and discussing a chop, while I was more agreeably engaged at Donnybrook with a *spoleeine*.

I dreaded an interview. To give my respected relative pain was most distressing; but, in my present state of mind, even to listen

patiently to his matrimonial overtures would be impossible. I begged of Peter to aid, counsel, and assist; and, to do the Captain justice, whether the call of love or war were made upon him by a friend, it was ever faithfully responded to.

“ I wouldn't matter stayin an hour or two with you and the ould fellow, only, upon my conscience, I'm ashamed to take off my hat in the drawing-room. I got a clip or two in the scrimmage ;” and the Captain, removing his *tile*, disclosed two large strips of sticking-plaster.

“ Egad ! I was just thinking what I would tell poor dear Mrs. Callaghan, when she made inquiries. Feaks ! I'll just say I was pitched off a jaunting car, going to attend a charity sermon at the Bethesda.”

“ Harry, my dear fellow,” and the General shook me warmly by the hand ; “ glad to see you look so well. How is the arm ?—Know the feel—got a touch myself of a rifle-ball from a d—d yellow-faced Yankee on the

Brandywine, who took a long shot at me from behind a hiccory tree. Captain Callaghan, your obedient servant. How astonished you must be, Harry, to find old Hannibal across the herring-pond. No matter, the surprise will prove agreeable. D—n that rascally editor—fancied you booked for the Monthly Obituary—and the infernal lawyer in for the property, after all. But matters look better; the balls roll right again, and what the raw recruit—that's you, Harry—has been trying for in vain, the old soldier has secured for him, —a wife, Captain Callaghan, and such a wife!"

Here Sir Cæsar O'Sullivan chuckled, and rubbed his hands.

"Upon my sowl, General dear, and for the same thing, the lad ought to go down upon his marrow-bones to ye," observed Peter. "Divil blister the wife I would have been master of, that would have been worth the thirteenth part of a *scullogue*, but for Charley Ormsby—may God be good to him!"

A gracious smile accompanied a push over

of the decanter to the gallant Captain, and a delicate inquiry into the causes which produced the mosaic of his scull's patchwork succeeded.

"Troth, General dear! if the truth must be tould, I was on the *ran-tan*, with a few friends this morning, and I'm a little the worse for the shindy. But about this conjugal affair—if it's likely to come off soon, I should wait for a day or two."

"Then, my dear Captain, I am delighted," returned the ex-commander, "to reply to you in the affirmative. Within a week, the bonds of Hymen shall be riveted."

Egad! between my honoured uncle and Peter Callaghan, I was likely to be married, "out of the face," as they say in Connaught, and that too without asking my own consent; and to this proceeding I entered a demurrer.

"I tell you what, Harry," said the General, "I have taken some trouble—broke my heart reading thirty sheets of parchment—signed my name four times to the same—and as

your wife's in the house, if you are not married within three days, may I, Cæsar O'Sullivan, be—"

"Stop, uncle!—'Tis well the recording angel has not registered a rash oath. I, too, swear in the face of Heaven—"

"Arrah! death an nouns! what are ye both cursing about?" inquired the gallant Captain: "if the ceiling was not pretty stout between ye, you would bring it down."

"You shall marry within the week," said the commander.

"*I shall not marry!*" returned his undutiful nephew.

"Then, by everything matrimonial, I'll marry her myself! You smile. If I don't, may my name be struck out of the Army List; and now, crook your knee, you undutiful scoundrel, and I'll introduce your honoured aunt."

Off hobbled the General.

"Peter," I whispered, "is the old man mad?"

“ Oh ! the divil a much doubt about that ! ” returned the Captain. “ He, the unfortunate ould sinner, dramin about matrimony ! Upon my conscience ! if there’s not a tile off his upper works, there’s rats in his garret, to a certainty.”

The door flew open—in came the General. A lady was leaning on his arm. I looked up. It was *Mary Harding*.

In a moment, she was clasped to my bosom.

“ Why, hang it ! Harry, she’s your aunt, you know. Spare your uncle’s feelings.”

“ My dear—dear uncle ! what shall I say ? ”

“ Upon my conscience ! ” said Peter Callaghan, “ I’ll tell ye what you ought to say—” and he looked for a moment at Miss Harding—“ that your uncle’s a regular trump, and the young lady — arrah ! monasindiaoul ! but a Quaker might brake a Convent for her ! ”

THE END.

F. Shoberl, Jun., Printer to H.R.H. Prince Albert, 51, Rupert Street,
Haymarket, London.

